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East London



B D C
Barking & Dagenham College

Higher Education and Communities: Barking & Dagenham

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Foreword

This publication is based on a research project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) as part of a suite of projects to investigate the higher education participation rates in a number of parliamentary constituency areas. These constituencies, which include the London borough of Barking & Dagenham, were identified by the HEFCE as areas where HE participation rates were comparatively low. The areas selected had been highlighted from the current young participation (POLAR) survey with consideration also being given to a number of other factors such as: regional diversity, HE 'cold spots' and rural/coastal locations. These research projects represent the second phase of a series of reports on young participation in HE, the first reports being published by the HEFCE in 2007. This first phase of projects were collectively known as the 'Four Cities' research, and comprised of the following constituencies: Birmingham Hodge Hill, Bristol South, Nottingham North and Sheffield Brightside. Having designated the areas to be researched, the HEFCE then approached a university within each area to ask if they would act as the lead institution, and also work with a group of HE and/or FEC partner institutions to conduct the research. In the case of the Barking & Dagenham project, we collaborated with both Barking FEC and Havering College of Further and Higher Education, and this proved to be a very effective and productive partnership, not least because it developed on longstanding and strong relationships between the three institutions.

As a piece of commissioned research, the research team were asked to address two specific outcomes. These were:

1. To provide all parties with a better understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors that might lie behind the low participation rates in each community, in order to establish what might be done to improve them.
2. A commitment to future action by the institutions informed by the research to embed strategic WP developments across the areas.

The operational focus of the commission was welcomed by the institutional partnership and also by the research team, which was comprised of members from each institution. The reason for this welcome was the opportunity the research would present to review existing strategies and activities intended to increase HE participation rates. The timing of the research meant that it was possible to feed the findings into the Widening Participation Strategic Assessments that each of the partner institutions were preparing for submission to the HEFCE at the end of June 2009.

In addition to having what we might describe as an operational focus, the research team was also asked to take a qualitative approach; developing innovative methodologies that were appropriate to the communities they were working with. The methodology section of the report describes and explains the mixed methods approach that was adopted. Experience across the research team of community based research projects meant that progress against the research timetable was extremely good and enabled interim findings to be considered periodically by the Research Steering Group. This group was composed (see acknowledgements) of members drawn from the three participating institutions and provided advice and guidance to the research team throughout the duration of the project.

As well as documenting and exploring the contextual features which provide the backdrop to the specific issue of young participation in HE, the report also raises critical questions about place, the distribution of educational resources and opportunities (both formal and informal), the value of different forms of intervention and hearing and listening to the lived experiences of the borough's young learners. So in

addition to this report, a DVD was also produced which captures extremely well the voices and experiences of many of the young people who so willingly participated in the research, and to whom we owe our sincere gratitude and appreciation.

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1 Executive Summary and Headline Findings

The Higher Education Funding Council of England's report *Young Participation in Higher Education (2005)* outlined patterns of engagement in Higher Education (HE) and identified a number of parliamentary constituencies around the country with low participation rates. Unsurprisingly, many of these areas suffer from widespread socio-economic deprivation. The importance of Widening Participation (WP) is clear – the HEFCE guidance on WP states that ***social barriers to educational achievement and HE participation entail a serious loss of talent in a modern economy. Widening participation is therefore vital for economic competitiveness as well as social justice.*** (HEFCE, 2007) Indeed, research continually points to the fact that learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds are far less likely to engage with HE, even if they have achieved well academically throughout secondary school. Although there have been improvements in WP in recent years, notably with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups (Connor et al, 2004), the gap in attainment between young learners from lower versus upper socio economic groups remains significant. This research in Barking and Dagenham is an attempt to understand the nuances of young learners' choices and engagement with HE.

Through the research we attempt to establish why comparatively so few young learners from the borough progress to HE from school. While ***barriers to participation*** is a well used term, in this research a more holistic approach is preferred. The starting point of this research is a more general understanding of the local socio-cultural environment in which young learners in Barking and Dagenham live. This approach is intended to highlight local assets, local problems and local conditions that might prevent young learners from making the choice to go into HE.

1.1 Methodology

The research project is inherently qualitative, however statistical data was analysed to triangulate some of the qualitative findings. Questionnaires were developed for learners at Barking College and these contained open ended questions. One on one interviews were conducted with key experts working in the borough. Focus groups were conducted with young learners in a variety of settings in the borough. To further highlight the lived experience of young learners in the borough one on one interviews were conducted at Havering College. Interviews were also undertaken with parents of young learners in the borough. Throughout the research, we have striven to give full weight to the voices of young learners. In addition, a short documentary research film has been made drawing on interviews conducted with young people.

From the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires we have had data from over 270 individuals, over 230 of these have been young learners in the borough.

The research team also had access to data from other relevant research being conducted at UEL. Data was examined from the Well London project conducted by the Institute for Health and Human Development which looked at locals' views about their community and its needs. Focus group data from work done for ELL2012 – an archive of East Londoner's views around the Olympic developments - was used as a comparator of young people's views from neighbouring East London boroughs. Data was also drawn from research done by Havering College in 2006 examining HE learners at the college.

1.2 Headline Findings

The headline findings from this research areas follows:

1.2.1 Aspirations

- When asked, 60% of young learners in Barking and Dagenham express an interest in participating in Higher Education. This finding comes both from the Tellus3 survey conducted in the borough in 2008, and is confirmed through the Barking College survey conducted for this project. This is significantly higher than national comparators. Clearly this suggests that the aspiration to go to University is high in the borough.

However, this does not translate into the learner number moving into HE that we would expect, given this aspiration. The main reasons that this is not the case are:

1.2.2 Achievement

- Low achievement, particularly in GCSE results including English and Mathematics, which remain below London and National comparators. This then has implications for the take-up of A-Level subjects.
- Alongside this there is a lack of emphasis by schools and other IAG providers on vocational progression routes into Higher Education, which could overcome the low achievement problems.

1.2.3 Finance and Families

- Young People feel that the costs of university are too high, and are unwilling to take on the level of debt required to complete a degree course. Although some are aware of bursaries, scholarships and other assistance, many do not know the details of this and still feel that living away from home for their studies and the university lifestyle means that they simply cannot afford the experience.
- From the focus groups, interviews and survey data it was found that there are a significant minority of families in the borough are hesitant about their young people going into HE, as they see this as unnecessary to the primary goal of gaining employment. Indeed, from the Barking College survey, it was found that 52% of learners stated that their families did not want them to go onto HE.

1.2.4 Gender and Ethnicity

- More females than males from the borough go into Higher Education – from HESA figures for 2008/09 46% of University entrants were male. However this is not evenly spread across the borough with some wards having 58% of male entrants, and others having only 35%.
- Although it was found that Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are more likely to enter HE, when looking at the entire demographic picture – the main groups who are not engaging with Higher Education are those from the lower socio-economic bands. This therefore is the cohort that should be a priority for intervention activities.

1.2.5 Information, Advice and Guidance

- While most young people receive Information, Advice and Guidance, and careers guidance at school (as well as via other avenues) much of this advice was felt by the young people not to be useful, for a variety of reasons. While the structures for giving information are in place, the relevance of the advice to young people is not always as good as it could be.

2 Context and Introduction to the project

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) published the report *Young Participation in Higher Education* (2005) which outlined detailed patterns of participation in Higher Education (HE). This report identified a number of parliamentary constituencies in which participation in HE were particularly low, and led to the commissioning by the HEFCE of the Four Cities research examining the following areas: Sheffield Brightside, Bristol South, Birmingham (Hodge Hill), and Nottingham North. The findings of these research projects were published in 2007.

This led to the commissioning of another round of similar research – the Five Cities research examining low participation rates in NE Cambridgeshire, Salford, Leeds, Hastings and Barking & Dagenham. Although there has been much research conducted on patterns of HE engagement amongst various groups of young people, much of this research is general in scope, and aside from the previous four cities research, the local, geo-specific variables of the conditions behind these low participation rates have not been comprehensively examined.

For Barking & Dagenham, this research is timely. It is an outer London Borough, and although not one of the Five Olympic Boroughs, its position as one of the Olympic gateway boroughs, coupled with its position within the Thames Gateway (London) regeneration area – the largest regeneration project in Europe – means that over the coming years there will be an emphasis on economic development in the sub-region. At the heart of this development is the need to improve skills in the area, as within the Thames Gateway serious skills shortages have been identified. Indeed, Barking & Dagenham tops the nation in terms of low skill rates, with other Thames Gateway (London) boroughs also faring poorly (Tindall, 2008).

It is hoped that this research project can not only reveal the reasons behind low HE participation rates in Barking & Dagenham, but also to recommend viable solutions to encourage more young people in the borough to take up the opportunities presented by engagement with Higher Education.

This study is an attempt to establish why comparatively so few young learners from the borough enter HE from school. While “barriers to participation” is a well used term, in this research we utilised a more holistic approach. That is, although these barriers will be revealed through the research – the starting point is a more general understanding of the local socio-cultural environment in which young learners in Barking and Dagenham live. Also, the very discourse around “barriers” needs to be contested as it is often used to imply more physical barriers, whereas much of the discussion in this report emphasises the implicit and often invisible character of exclusion. More specifically, the research aims to:

- Provide an overview of Barking & Dagenham’s educational resources including schools, Further Education (FE), HE, Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) providers, and other relevant initiatives
- Provide a short synopsis of the borough including demographic data, policy drivers, job market conditions, the nature of social class and local economy and the culture and tradition of local communities in the borough
- Explore the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of young people in Barking & Dagenham regarding education

- Consider the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance in the area and its impact on young learners
- Identify examples of good practice in the borough where there are significant inroads in addressing the problem of low levels of participation
- Establish reasons behind patterns of non-engagement with HE among specific groups of young people

Alongside the research strand of this project, there is also an ambition to help embed recommendations that will help to raise the numbers of young learners entering Higher Education in the borough. Through the programme of research new associations and affiliations have been made. In particular the relationship between UEL, Barking College and Havering College of Further and Higher Education has been strengthened through this research process. The research teams and personnel involved are already discussing future research and projects to further reveal the fine grain detail of young learners' educational choices in the borough. The Widening Participation Strategic Assessments being developed by these institutions have made mention of the project and the value of the findings to the institutions involved. These findings have enabled the University and Colleges to adapt their existing outreach and recruitment work to make these activities more suited to young people in Barking and Dagenham.

3 Methodology

The research began with a literature review of local policy in Barking & Dagenham, including children's plans, regeneration plans and educational plans. This local policy review was then widened to include policy from the Thames Gateway London sub-region – particularly in terms of the need to develop strong local economies and to up-skill these communities, and pan-London policies that affect the borough. Other literature that was reviewed through the research programme, was limited to those issues that emerged through the key informant interviews and the engagement activities with young learners. While this review of local and regional policy was the first step in understanding the local area and its policy drivers, it is not part of the research project to provide a comprehensive literature review. Rather, the relevant policy discussions are presented in relevant report sections as an aid to the understanding of local activity.

Alongside this initial policy trawl and review, secondary statistical data was collected, and analysed in light of the qualitative findings. As the research project is inherently qualitative, the statistical data was examined after the qualitative research had begun. This was to ensure that the final report was not over burdened with statistics, and that the stories that began to emerge from young learners in the borough were not overshadowed by this information. That the voices of these young people (along with key experts working in relevant positions) should be maintained and heard was a priority for the research team. This approach to qualitative research uses some ideas from Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) where the qualitative data is not examined via a pre-existing theoretical lens, but once coded and analysed, the data itself is used to point towards theorisation. Once coded, the qualitative data from the young learners was then triangulated with data from key expert interviews, survey results and statistical data.

This statistical data was collected from the following sources:

- Demographic data,
- POLAR,
- Index of Multiple Deprivation,
- Experian,
- Census,
- UCAS
- Acorn
- HESA
- Educational achievement
- Health statistics (including teenage pregnancy rates and disability data)
- Employment figures
- Benefits data
- Free school meals information

These statistics where possible were analysed at least down to ward level, with further analysis in some instances to Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level. This was important as Barking & Dagenham is a relatively large borough – and like all London Boroughs it contains pockets of relative wealth, and pockets of deprivation, often in close proximity to one another.

The mapping exercise was then conducted, identifying the main educational, cultural, economic, social and youth based resources in Barking & Dagenham and included the following:

- Schools
- Colleges
- Non-Formal education possibilities
- Main employers
- Main industrial sectors
- Youth clubs and youth facilities
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) providers

The mapping was used to build a profile of the borough, and was also instrumental in the development of the list of key informants – largely comprised of experts working in youth services and education in the area. The key informants were then interviewed. Most interviews were undertaken face to face, but a number of others were conducted over the phone. The interviews were semi-structured and were reasonably lengthy - most were over an hour in duration. Where possible interviews were recorded and where this was not possible thorough notes were taken. Complete naturalistic transcripts of the interviews were not written up. Due to time constraints summary transcripts were developed, and the interviews were listened to several times. The transcripts coming from interviews with young people used codes to identify participants to protect any individuals. Consent forms were signed by parents of young people under 18, and all researchers interviewing young people were CRB checked. The interviews were conducted with personnel that work for the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, UEL, the two FE colleges – Havering and Barking College, various agency workers in the borough (youth groups, outreach workers etc) as well as other experts who work with young people such as youth theatre groups, and workers from drop in advice centres. In total 45 interviews were conducted.

Questionnaires were also developed – one for UEL students who lived in Barking & Dagenham, and one for Barking College students who came from schools in the borough. These were intended not to be statistically robust, but instead asked a number of open ended questions, and were designed to be used as a tool for recruitment for one on one interviews and focus groups with young learners. The Barking College questionnaire was delivered in hard copies. The UEL questionnaire was delivered electronically via BOS – Bristol Online Surveys developed at Bristol University. From the UEL respondents, very few met the criteria of young learner. We found that out of 447 students registered as living in the borough, those that responded to the questionnaire were mostly mature learners. While this is interesting in and of itself, this factor, coupled with the very low response rate (of 33), meant that the UEL surveys were useful only for the qualitative open ended questions, and were analysed accordingly.

The questionnaire for young learners from Barking College, on the other hand, was more successful and we received 125 responses. Again there were many open ended questions about educational experiences in Barking and Dagenham, together with more traditional survey questions. The questionnaires were analysed using SPSS while the qualitative answers were analysed alongside the data from the interviews and focus groups.

Initially we thought to advertise the survey via online social networking tools such as facebook. Indeed we identified a large number of relevant facebook groups – such as school groups, school alumni groups etc. The membership of these groups was

calculated to be over 20,000 – obviously less in reality as a group subscriber can join any number of groups. We thought that young people who use these technologies on a day to day basis would be best recruited via these same means. However this turned out to be a poor way to recruit. Nevertheless, comments about the local area by residents on these facebook groups were considered in the research.

The focus groups were held at a number of locations throughout Barking & Dagenham. Participants were recruited a number of ways – via the questionnaires, snowballing, and engagement with a number of youth groups and youth clubs. Some of these focus groups and interviews were filmed as part of the research process. Sessions with particularly vulnerable young people were not filmed – and some focus groups requested that they not be filmed. In these instances audio recordings were used. A focus group was conducted with disabled learners at an inclusive youth group in the borough (6 young people), one was conducted with the YWCA (7 young people), and one with the Barking and Dagenham youth forum (6 young people).

We also spent a day filming with young people from the borough, who revealed to us their own version of Barking and Dagenham, taking us to hang out areas, talking about what young people do in the borough, and talking about their lives, ambitions and attitudes towards education, and work. This proved to be a very fruitful exercise that resulted in rich in-depth data.

One to one interviews were conducted with young learners at Havering College, which were conducted on site. Some 30 semi structured face to face interviews were done in this manner. We also conducted one to one filmed interviews both in Barking Town Centre and at Barking College; here approximately 17 young people were interviewed.

By this means, approximately 230 learners from Barking and Dagenham were engaged with either via a one to one interview, a focus group, or questionnaire.

Parents were also interviewed to understand familial and generational patterns of aspiration in the borough. Again these were conducted face to face and revealed parent's hopes and fears for their children's futures in terms of education and work. Four of these in depth interviews were conducted.

This report also draws on other qualitative research conducted in the area – principally a report done at Havering College in 2006 about why young learners choose to study HE at an FE college rather than at a University. This included investigations into the needs of HE learners in an FE environment, and their expectations of study and life after qualification (Finch 2006).

We also were able to draw on qualitative data made available to us by the Institute of Health and Human Development (IHHD) at UEL, who conducted in-depth qualitative interviews at facilitated café style events throughout London, including Barking and Dagenham. This data was collected through the Well London project, which examined local conditions at LSOA level in some of the most deprived areas in London. While this project's aim was to evaluate the health and well being needs of these localised communities (around the themes of healthy eating, physical activity, access to arts and culture, open spaces, and mental wellbeing) much of the discussion was specifically about the lifestyles of local residents and their attitude towards their local environment. These community consultations also focussed heavily on young people, and many youth only consultations and groups were held. Through this process the views of 73 residents, including a large cohort of young people were canvassed.

We were also able to draw on focus group work undertaken by London East Research Institute (LERI) for the ELL2012 Archive. This archive's aim was to collect oral histories and canvass East Londoners' views on the Olympic developments as they unfold. Filmed focus groups with young people in East London schools have been taking place, examining young people's views about their future and some of this data has been used comparatively here.

4 Barking & Dagenham

Barking & Dagenham is an outer London borough, that sits North of the Thames, bordered by Redbridge to the North, Havering to the East, and Newham to the West. It consists of 17 Wards, 3,611 hectares and has a population of around 166,900.¹ To a large extent these boundaries (like all constituency boundaries) are artificial and do not reflect the way in which people's lives flow from one Local Authority to another to work, for leisure activities, or for education. While it is out of the scope of this research to establish the local character of surrounding boroughs in any great detail or depth – the adjoining Boroughs of Havering, Newham and Redbridge will also be considered in this research where appropriate. In particular Havering and Newham are important due to the fact that both boroughs provide HE offers – in Havering, Havering College, offers a range of HE programmes, and the University of East London is situated in Newham and is closest University to the borough.



Figure 1: The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham in relation to all London boroughs

4.1 Historical Context

The borough was formed in 1965 when the greater part of the municipal borough of Barking and the entire municipal borough of Dagenham merged to form the London Borough of Barking. At this time, the municipal borough of Dagenham was transferred

¹ Based on mid-year population estimates 2007, ONS

to Greater London from Essex. The borough was renamed Barking and Dagenham in 1980. Despite the recent establishment of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, the area has an ancient and rich history. Barking Abbey was established as a Benedictine nunnery in 666. The Abbey survived, despite Danish invasions until 1539, with the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII. The parish church St Margaret's now stands on this site. Early industries in Barking were fishing, and boat building, including repairs to the Royal Fleet of Henry VIII. Later, at Creekmouth, the Barking Power Station was in operation from 1925 until the 1970s.

Although Barking was quite an urban district as far back as the late 1800's, Dagenham was far less urban until the 1920s when the Becontree estate was built by the London County Council. This vast estate, over 3000 acres, spread into areas of Ilford and Barking and saw population numbers in the area increase dramatically. The estate consisted of 24,000 homes intended to house returning soldiers and their families from the First World War, under the Homes for Heroes' scheme and at the time was the largest public housing development in the world.

The Ford motor company moved its operations from Manchester to Dagenham in 1931. The site in Dagenham at its height had 4,000,000 sq.ft. of floor space and employed 40,000. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s production here was scaled down dramatically as manufacturing was moved to other parts of the world. In 2002 full production of motor cars was discontinued, and the site became the location for Ford's global centre of excellence for diesel engine design and manufacture, Dagenham Stamping Operations, and CEME, the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence. Today, the site employs around 4000 with most of the work centred on the assembly of diesel engines.

The legacy of this industrial past still affects the borough today. The heyday of production at Ford is still well within living memory of many local residents. Many of the adult interviewees mentioned Ford and discussed the implications of such large job losses to the area. As one respondent put it *–Ford is our coal mine.*² Alongside Ford, other manufacturing sites such as Ever Ready (batteries), Sterling Ltd. (engines) and chemical plants historically provided employment for local communities. The decline in these industries is at the heart of the current deprivation to be found in the area.

4.2 Regeneration priorities

As these vast manufacturing sites shut down, not only was potential employment lost, but vast areas of brown field land now became an eyesore for residents. Today, these areas are a priority for regeneration and the London Riverside development, of which the Barking riverside development is a part, aims to regenerate the riverside area of east London through providing new housing, employment opportunities and other affiliated services. Barking riverside is 350 acres of brown field land which will see 10,000 new homes in the area, housing approximately 25,000. New transport links are planned, and two new primary schools and one secondary school will also be built. This development will also allow public use of 2 km of the Thames riverfront for the first time.

The Dagenham dock area is also a priority for regeneration with an emphasis on sustainable industries. This area, which is to the south of Dagenham and adjacent to the River Thames, is earmarked to become a sustainable Industrial Park. In

² Key Informant Interview

conjunction with CEME it will become a focus for high-tech engineering and green manufacturing. There are five main facets to this development:

- A research centre for practical research on reclamation, recycling and reprocessing of waste
- The Green business Park which aims to attract SMEs with the green focus
- A local community resource for Barking and Dagenham which will involve local communities, schools etc and provide training for local communities
- A virtual component providing IT and web based training mechanisms to facilitate knowledge transfer
- The promotion of green chains between businesses on site moving towards a closed loop system where waste products from one business become a resource for another (LDA, 2001)

The emphasis on green industry and the local authorities' emphasis on greening other areas has resulted in Barking and Dagenham receiving beacon status for its work around sustainability.³

Alongside the London riverside development, Barking & Dagenham sits within the Thames Gateway, which is the largest regeneration area in Europe. Geographically, the Thames Gateway is strategically important as it sits between London and mainland Europe. The priorities for the area as set out in the *Thames Gateway Delivery Plan* (2007) include the development of a strong economy, improvements in the quality of life for local residents, and the establishment of the gateway as an eco-region with an emphasis on sustainable technologies.

The expected job creation in the gateway over the next 20 years will require a high level of skills, and therefore the existing skills deficit in Barking & Dagenham needs to be addressed, if local people are to be employed in these new emerging industries. While there have been a number of initiatives established to address this (such as the opening of the Barking Learning Centre in 2007) the up-skilling of local populations will be an ongoing process over the coming years. This, however, is a priority for regeneration in the borough.

The Barking Learning Centre is part of the wider regeneration of Barking town centre. Despite a lively retail environment and street markets, this locality is one of the most deprived in Barking. The priorities for regeneration of the town centre are largely around local economic development as there will be investment in retail outlets and the development of a new business centre. Alongside this there is the aim to create 4,000 new homes in the town centre with 25% of these to be designated as affordable housing.

4.3 The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Although Barking and Dagenham is not one of the five Olympic boroughs, and therefore will miss out on much of the Olympic regeneration that is already taking place in East London, there are still possibilities to capitalise on this development for the borough. Barking and Dagenham has positioned and branded itself as an Olympic gateway borough, however it is yet to be seen whether the Olympic developments will

³ Beacon status is granted to Local Authorities who can demonstrate a clear vision, excellent services and a willingness to innovate. Awards are given by government ministers based on recommendations made by an independent advisory panel.

trickle outward to the peripheral East London boroughs. In any case the Olympics represents an opportunity for Barking and Dagenham, and in particular for young people in the borough. The variety of volunteering opportunities presented by the Olympics will enable young people of the borough to be involved in an historic event, and will also help them gain vital skills in a wide range of areas. There is some evidence emerging that young people in the East London boroughs are aware of the opportunities the Olympics present, and plan to take part. Young people's attitudes towards the Olympics are being collected at UEL as part of the ELL 2012 archive, an online resource that is being developed to capture the local perspectives of East Londoners as they live through the Olympic experience. Part of this work involved focus groups with young people in East London. Preliminary findings from this work suggests that one of the main benefits that young people feel will come from the Olympics is international recognition of their area. Despite a level of cynicism, they are proud of their neighbourhoods, and view the Olympics as a way by which they and their families, and their communities will be put on the world stage. The place-making role that the hosting of the Olympics provides is important, as is the legacy promise and physical regeneration of large parts of East London. From the focus groups with young people, many are aware that when London is seen through international eyes, "their patch" of London – East London is often ignored, unknown, or misunderstood. The data here suggests that these young people are proud of their area, and are fully expecting to take advantage of the possibilities opened to them via the Olympic developments.⁴

4.4 The Local Context

Despite these regeneration developments, and the gains made in recent years, much of Barking and Dagenham suffers from deprivation as viewed through a number of indicators including economic activity, health, crime and educational achievement. The current economic downturn is already being felt in the high streets of the borough as many retail outlets remain vacant and an increase in crime, such as burglary, have already been seen.⁵

The importance of neighbourhood type on numbers of young learners going into HE has been well researched (HEFCE, 1997) with findings showing that those from deprived areas have lower achievement in terms of grades, as well as correspondingly low aspirations to enter HE. This is, of course, the rationale behind both this suite of research projects (the Five Cities research) as well as the previous Four Cities' studies.

What follows is an overview of the borough in terms of its demographics, and key statistical indicators to establish the social and economic fabric of the borough. While this is not intended to be a thorough statistical analysis, these figures do provide a backdrop to the qualitative data that has been collected, and has been used to triangulate some of the qualitative findings. When possible this data has been examined down to ward level. Due to time constraints and the qualitative nature of the research, it has not been possible, nor useful, to drill down further to SOA or LSOA level. However, this would be a fruitful area for further research as through the interviews it was suggested that there are particular LSOAs with endemic problems such as worklessness, high numbers on incapacity benefits, and teenage pregnancies. The statistical analysis that follows is tempered with residents' views of their local area

⁴ London East Research Institute Focus Group for ELL2012 archive project

⁵ Key informant interview

taken from a variety of sources - interviews for this project as well as from the Well London research, and questionnaire responses.

4.5 Demographics

The population of the borough is relatively youthful, with almost a quarter of residents being under 15, as can be seen in table 1. This is considerably higher than the London average, and is of particular importance to schools and other education providers since these young people will require secondary school places and FE and HE access. Due to the regeneration priorities outlined above, it is expected that there will be a further increase in young people in the borough as it is expected that many who will take advantage of the housing builds will be families. This relatively youthful population means that there are fewer in the borough of working age than the London average, with 61.4% of Barking and Dagenham residents being of working age, compared to 66.9% for London.

Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band, Mid 2007	Barking and Dagenham	London
All Persons; All Ages	166,900	7,556,900
All Persons; Aged 0-15	24.2%	19.3%
All Persons; Aged 16-29	20%	21.6%
All Persons; Aged 30-44	23.3%	26.7%
All Persons; Aged 45-64 (Males), 45-59 (Females)	18.1%	18.6%
All Persons; Aged 65 and Over (Males), 60 and Over (Females)	14.4%	13.8%
All Persons; of Working Age	61.4%	66.9%

Table 1: Resident population estimates by broad age band mid 2007
Source: National Statistics

The effects of having nearly 25% of residents under the age of 15 are particularly significant for education provision in Barking and Dagenham. Primary school enrolments this year have increased and, at least anecdotally, this seems to be driven by the influx of international arrivals to the area.⁶

4.6 Ethnicity

Barking and Dagenham is made up of a number of different ethnic groups, however, like other outer London boroughs, has a lower BME population than London overall, and far lower than many inner London boroughs. These figures below represent the total ethnic breakdown for the borough as a whole, however it must be noted that these populations are not evenly spread as many wards have a greater percentage of BME groups than others. For example, according to the 2001 census the wards of Parsloes and Alibon have just over 90% white British residents, compared to Abbey ward which has 46.18%. The effect of this ethnic mix on schools is important. Although there are differences between schools, on average across the borough, school children from BME groups form just under 50% of the school population. This includes all levels of schooling (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009).

⁶ Key informant Interview

Ethnic Breakdown of Barking and Dagenham 2006	Barking and Dagenham	London
All Persons (count)	165,700	7,512,400
White	76.7%	69.4%
White: British	71.2%	58%
White: Irish	1.4%	2.5%
White: Other White	4.1%	8.9%
Mixed	2.5%	3.5%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	1%	1%
Mixed: White and Black African	0.5%	0.5%
Mixed: White and Asian	0.5%	1%
Mixed: Other Mixed	0.5%	1%
Asian or Asian British	7.7%	13.1%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	3%	6.5%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	2.3%	2.3%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	1.4%	2.3%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	1%	2%
Black or Black British	11.2%	10.7%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	2.4%	4.3%
Black or Black British: African	8.2%	5.5%
Black or Black British: Other Black	0.6%	0.8%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	1.9%	3.4%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	1%	1.5%
Other Ethnic Group	0.9%	1.9%

Table 2: Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (Percentages)⁷ 2006
Source: National Statistics

The ethnic makeup of the borough, seen in table 2, is particularly important, and has had political consequence as the British National Party (BNP) is particularly active here. At present, in terms of political makeup, the borough has a Labour majority with 37 seats, the BNP has 12 seats, the Conservatives have 1 seat and Labour & Co-op has 1 seat. However, even before the recent MP expenses scandal, many interviewees in the borough were concerned that the BNP would gain seats in forthcoming elections.

However, while many respondents are aware of the BNP's activities in the borough, (parents who were interviewed talked of the racism of their neighbours, and spoke of receiving BNP pamphlets through their mail) when young people were asked about race relations, they felt that at least for their generation, this was not an issue. The young people pointed out that while social groups at schools were often drawn around ethnic lines they did not report any violence or disrespect between ethnic groups.⁸ Interviews with careers advisers at schools confirmed this social division amongst groups at schools, but again reported no incidents between members of these groups.

The ethnic communities in the borough are unevenly spread, as seen above, through the 2001 census. However, these statistics, while useful in ascertaining the levels of ethnic make up in the borough, are also to be treated with a level of caution, due to their age. Barking and Dagenham has seen a lot of "turnover", with complex patterns of

⁷ These figures are based on the 2001 Census, with estimates for 2006 produced using an orthodox cohort-component method which requires the estimation of the base population, ageing this population, adding births, subtracting deaths and adjusting for migration. This last is very important in Barking and Dagenham as this borough has experienced a lot of inward and outward migration, particularly from Eastern Europe in recent years.

⁸ From filmed day with young people

outward and inward migration taking place here, and in neighbouring boroughs through the eastern parts of London.

Also, the census data and reporting of BME figures tends to be done in a simple dichotomy of BME versus White British groups, that does not take into account the diversity of ethnicities with their own cultural attitudes towards work and education, which is of course, of particular interest to this study. These attitudes of particular ethnicities to education amongst what can be called the newcomer groups into the borough have been seen by many to account for the increases in involvement with HE in the area. Through the interviews many spoke of particular BME groups, specifically Asian groups and Nigerian communities, place an exceptionally high value on education. This can be confirmed by the numbers of ethnic groups who seek out the IAG sessions run by UEL at the Barking Learning Centre. Demographic information is taken by the service from all who receive one to one advice about education. Consistently, it is these BME groups who are accessing this service the most. While some of this can be accounted for by the fact that this service operates from the town centre (in Albion ward), which has a higher BME rate than outlying wards in the borough, the qualitative findings suggest that this is the case in other areas also.

The new arrivals have been a positive influence, educationally speaking, as they are often more serious about education, and this influences peer groups of young learners.

Kids learn by seeing, and now BME kids are trying to succeed

The BME cohorts are determined to do well in their education and this has improved aspirations. It is beginning to filter into the more established populations.

Interview with careers adviser at a secondary school

This suggests that there is a positive influence being felt in the borough from the newer groups to settle here. While this peer group influence is good in encouraging indigenous populations to enter HE, more could be made of this positive influence by encouraging young people to mix socially outside their ethnic groups. Indeed this idea that some BME communities value education more than other groups is borne out by the Barking College survey results. When we cross tabulated responses for learners who did NOT want to go on to HE, with ethnicity and with familial desire for their young people to go to HE, we found that within the white indigenous populations there is still significant resistance to engagement with HE.

4.7 Migration Patterns

As the ethnic mix of the borough is so important in terms of politics and education, it is worth spending some time examining the complex patterns of migration, linked to ethnicity and class that takes place throughout East London. In a study of the socio-demographic impacts of change in East London the authors outline patterns of migration in the eastern boroughs and find that much of the gentrification of these areas is taking place through middle class BME settlement (Butler et al, 2008). Their study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data, and reveals complex patterns of inward and outward migration. The BME populations of Barking and Dagenham doubled in the years between 1991 and 2001; however the very low starting point of these communities' means that compared to the rest of London the BME populations still remains very low. This study found that the increase of BME groups in Barking and

Dagenham are mainly from Black African middle class groups, while Black African non-middle class groups are under-represented (Butler et al, 2008:137). While the specific reasons for this remain hazy, the authors postulate that this has to do with “parental educational strategies” in moving away from inner city boroughs (Tower Hamlets, for example) to more suburban boroughs where the quality of education is perceived to be better. The Bangladeshi populations in Barking and Dagenham also follow this trend; with the proportion of middle class Bangladeshis being higher here than the London average (Butler et al, 2008:139).

While many studies have examined the propensity of upper managerial and professional white communities to move to outer London boroughs – the concept of “white flight” (Butler and Robson, 2003), this study shows that BME groups are also more likely to gravitate to outer London boroughs “upon signs of upward economic mobility” (Butler et al, 2008:140).

These findings might account for the patterns of internal (non-international) migration found in the borough. In terms of numbers, in 2006/7 internal migrants coming to Barking and Dagenham from other parts of London and around the country was 10,690. However 12,130 left the borough for other parts of the city, or country, leaving a deficit of 1,450. (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009:7).

One of the qualitative interviews from the study of a resident of Newham, an adjoining borough, is particularly pertinent here:

I: How do you find life here?

Newham 1633: I wouldn't want to live here too long.

I: Why not?

Newham 1633: Basically things are happening around here that shouldn't. People are getting beat up for no reason at all... I wouldn't have a family around here.

I: So are you thinking of moving on anywhere?

Newham 1633: Dagenham, the schools are better over there. The people are a bit better over there. It's rather quiet there; it's not as loud as down here.

(Interview in Butler et al, 2008:140)

Although there is evidence of these middle-class ethnic communities moving from more central east London boroughs to the periphery of London, there is similar evidence showing patterns of migration from Barking and Dagenham to boroughs even further eastward. It is clear from this research that access to education is an important motivation for outward migration as primary and secondary school provision in Redbridge and Havering is seen as the best in East London (Butler et al, 2008, 145).

This has been found through the interviews and questionnaires for this research also. Many young learners expressed a preference to study in Havering over Barking and Dagenham. Not surprisingly, some interviews with parents also revealed this preference.

What all this means for the borough of Barking and Dagenham, if these trends continue, is that more middle-class ethnic minority groups from the inner Boroughs in East London will keep choosing to move to the Borough for its perceived quality of life and its education offer. However, the contra trend of middle-class groups of all ethnicities may continue to choose to move even further eastward to the boroughs of Havering and Redbridge. It is unknown what effects this middle-class churn through East London will have on the educational landscape in the future, however this would be a fruitful area of study for a longitudinal piece of research.

Currently, the immediate and noticeable effects of these migration patterns have been to improve the numbers entering HE in the borough, possible through BME enrolments, as evidenced by the interviews with young learners and careers advisers. Here, it was found that there has been significant international inward migration into the borough, with a noticeable influx of Eastern European communities in recent years. Many of these communities have little or no English, and certainly this has been a challenge for schools, as in the borough 12% of school pupils now speak English as a second language (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009).

Migration figures for the borough show that in 2006/7 show that there were 1,240 international migrants to the borough, with 640 international migrants moving out of the borough. An additional 210 asylum seekers came to the borough, while 120 left. This means that over this year there were only 690 additional international migrants in the borough over this year (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009:7).

4.8 Housing

Despite the gentrification outlined above, Barking and Dagenham has a significantly higher proportion of local authority maintained dwellings than both the London and the national average, as can be seen in table 3. Indeed, nearly 28% of the borough's overall housing stock is owned by the local authority. This translates to 10,844 households on the local authority register. However, only 4.4% of housing stock in the borough is held by registered social landlords, the London average for this is nearly 11%.

	Barking & Dagenham	London	England
Price for All Dwellings; Mean	£175,425	£318,490	£206,715
LA Dwelling Stock	27.8%	13.3%	8.3%
RSL Dwelling Stock	4.4%	10.7%	9.5%
Private Rented or Owned	67.8%	75.8%	81.8%

Table 3: Housing Type in Barking and Dagenham
Source: National Statistics, Figures from Dec 2006

The vast majority of accommodation types in the borough is terraced housing which constitutes 54.16% (a large part of this is the Becontree estate), followed by purpose-built apartments flats or maisonettes at 22.34%. Detached housing makes up only 2.27% of housing stock in this borough. Barking and Dagenham has reasonably priced housing stock compared to the rest of London. The relatively low housing prices in the borough (coupled with the regeneration priority for new housing) means that many first time buyers and families with young children will find Barking and Dagenham an attractive proposition.

As there are such significant numbers of residents living in Local Authority accommodation, overcrowding may be an issue here. While none of the young people we spoke to raised this as a particular issue – and through the interviews this was not a question that was asked, from previous experience working in London, and from the Well London project, there is some evidence of this being a problem for some residents, as well as poor maintenance of their accommodation by the council.

The lifts are disgusting and full of wee. I live on the 16th floor and if the lifts break down I can't exit the building. I have a child and need to use a buggy.

Well London interview

The link between poor housing and poor educational achievement is clear – if young learners do not have a quiet space to themselves to study, if they do not have a computer, they are at a disadvantage in terms of the ability to complete their coursework at home.

Often staying at home to go to university is not an option because of overcrowding – so this idea that young people will go to their local university or college to study HE is not always the case – especially for those in state housing – when they turn 18 they want to leave such overcrowded conditions – and not prolong the agony.

Key Expert Interview

4.9 Economic Activity and Worklessness

The benefits figures (see table 4) show that Barking and Dagenham is comparable to the London average in terms of the receipt of benefits, although those receiving lone parent benefits is higher than average.

Benefits Data: Working Age Client Group, February 2008	Barking and Dagenham	London	England
Job Seekers	17%	18%	16%
Incapacity Benefits	39%	44%	49%
Lone Parent	27%	22%	15%
Carer	6%	6%	8%
Others on Income Related Benefits	4%	4%	3%
Disabled	5%	5%	7%
Bereaved	1%	1%	2%

Table 4: Benefits Data: Working Age Client Group, February 2008
Source: National Statistics

The number of economically active residents in the borough in 2008 was 74.6%, just below the London average. However these figures do not reflect the types of work engaged with in the borough, with the main employment types, according to the last census, being:

- Wholesale and retail trade, repairs (11,609)
- Real estate, renting and business activities (8,406)
- Transport, storage and communications (7,430)

- Manufacturing (6,541)
- Health and social work (6,336)
- Construction (6,189)
- Financial intermediation (5,074)

In fact only 30.7% of residents who are employed in the borough work in the top employment groups (i.e. upper managerial and professional), compared with 53% for London. Conversely 26% of these work in lower level employment, compared with the London average of 13.9% (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009). This is a reflection of both the skill levels in the area, as well as the local job market which does not provide many high level jobs outside the Local Authority and affiliated medical industries such as health and social care. Indeed the local job market is a long term problem that regeneration priorities are attempting to address, although this is a process which may take decades. To assist this Barking and Dagenham Enterprise is a vehicle led by local business to build opportunity and entrepreneurship in the borough. Via this two new business centres are planned, and a school for entrepreneurship is to be developed (LBBD, 2009). In terms of VAT registered businesses in the borough, the breakdown can be found in table 5.

VAT Based Enterprises by Broad Industry Group, 2004	
All VAT Based Enterprises	2330
Agriculture	5
Production	245
Construction	385
Motor Trades	125
Wholesale	235
Retail	365
Hotels & Catering	165
Transport	150
Post & Telecommunications	25
Finance	10
Property & Business Services	465
Education	10
Health	10
Public Admin & Other Services	130

Table 5: VAT Based Enterprises by Broad Industry Group at Ward Level, 2004
Source: National Statistics

Here, the main businesses in the borough come from property and business services (465), Construction (385) and retail (365). However, these figures are from 2004, and with the recession, property and retail business have been particularly affected by the downturn.

4.10 Health

The relative health of those living in Barking and Dagenham is poor in comparison with national and London averages, as shown in table 6. The relative health inequality of East Londoners is a relatively well known phenomenon, and as we can see from the indicators, life expectancy is significantly lower than the average for London and England. To put this into perspective, while the life expectancy for males in the borough is 75.9 (compared to the London average of 77.4) this average hides the

deep health inequalities that exist within London. Wealthier, western boroughs have far higher life expectancies, Westminster, for example, has a life expectancy for males of 80.2, and Kensington and Chelsea fares the best in London with a life expectancy for males of 83.1.

	Barking and Dagenham	London	England
Life Expectancy at Birth (Males)	75.9	77.4	77.32
Life Expectancy at Birth (Females)	79.8	82	81.55

Table 6: Life expectancy of both males and females in the borough compared with London and England.

Source: National Statistics

Teenage pregnancy rates in Barking and Dagenham are high. Most of the key informants mentioned the rates of teen pregnancies in the borough during the interview process. Table 7 shows the rate of conception of women aged 15-17 per 1000 population, and is clearly above both national and regional averages. However, these rates are higher in actuality as these figures do not count conception rates in the under 15s. While parents as young as 13 have recently been highlighted in the national press⁹; for Barking and Dagenham this phenomenon is not new and in the last year there have been at least three 13 year old mothers in the borough.¹⁰ It was claimed through the interview process that last year 25% of those not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) between the ages of 16 and 19 were NEET due to pregnancy.¹¹ One informant also told us through the research that the average age of a grandmother in the borough was 42. While this has not been confirmed statistically, the awareness amongst those interviewed that there was a problem with teenage conception rates in the borough, is high.

Under 18 Conceptions – conceptions in women aged between 15 and 17		Barking and Dagenham	London	England
Under 18 Conceptions	Rate per 1000	59.6	45.6	40.6

Table 7: Under 18 conception rates in Barking and Dagenham figures for Jan – Dec 2006, updated 2009

Source: National Statistics

Interviews and focus groups with young people revealed no single reason why these rates should be so high. However, one conversation that took place with 17 year old girls in the borough shed light on some of the prevailing attitudes towards both teenage conception, and to corresponding attitudes around birth and termination.

I: Why do you think the teenage pregnancy statistics in the borough are so high?

(They all laugh)

YP1: It's because of the slags that go round and have sex with heaps of different boys.

Focus Group Conversation

⁹ For example, —3 Year Old Boy Vows to be Good Parent,” *The Telegraph*, 14th February 2009

¹⁰ Key informant interview

¹¹ Key informant interview

The interviewer pointed out that once pregnant, termination was a possibility. This seemed to shock some of the girls who then discussed what they would do if faced with pregnancy.

YP2: That's a bit harsh isn't it?

YP3: Come on – if you got pregnant now would you keep it?

YP2: Nah – I dunno -

YP3: (interrupts) Come on!!

YP2: Nah - I wouldn't.

YP3: Come on, you can't even make a cup of tea how would you look after a baby?

Focus Group Conversation

This indicates a level of discomfort with the choice to terminate pregnancy. These decisions naturally come down to moral choices, and are often based on religious grounds. However, there is also a class element, as confirmed by one youth worker when discussing the pregnancy rates.

We have very young mothers with very young mothers. And if you compare the conception rates for Barking & Dagenham and Havering, I don't actually think, or it was the case, they weren't very different, but it was the case that Havering young people were having more terminations whereas in Barking & Dagenham Mum or Mum and Dad were supporting, and actually encouraging, the young person to have the baby.

Interview with youth worker

From the conversation with young girls in the borough, this idea is confirmed.

I: Do any of your friends have babies?

YP4: None of our actual mates do.

YP2: One of my mates has had an abortion.

I: Why do you think this is happening in Barking and Dagenham?

YP 3: They get pregnant by accident.

YP1: And if you've got a mum and dad that don't care – and some of them even think its good and make them keep the baby.

YP4: Like B - you always see her mum pushing her baby – I heard she forced her to keep it.

YP1: Their parents had kids young so they just think that's what you do.

Focus Group Conversation

The report *Teenage Pregnancy*, produced by the Social Exclusion Unit (1999) found three main reasons why teenage pregnancy rates are high:

1. Low Expectations

The report finds that young people who are disadvantaged and who have low expectations of education and/or employment are much more likely to get pregnant.

2. Ignorance

The report finds that many young people are ignorant about many aspects of sexual health, including contraception and STDs.

3. Mixed Messages

When talking to young people the Social Exclusion Unit found many teenagers to be confused on the one hand by so much sexual imagery used in the media and other areas, compared with the social morality that is either embarrassed about, judges, or denies teenage sexuality. (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999)

It seems that perhaps all of these reasons are at work in the borough, and despite initiatives to lower these rates over the last years, the numbers of teenage pregnancies in the borough are still higher than London or National averages.

They did a study and the main reason young people said that they got pregnant was because of a lack of information about the consequences of sexual activity – only 5% of young people know about the mechanics of sex and pregnancy.

Key Informant Interview

4.10.1 Unpaid Care

Throughout the key informant interviews, many people talked about the high numbers of residents, including young people who provide unpaid care to family members. While the rates in table 8 are based on the 2001 census, and therefore are somewhat out of date, the numbers involved in unpaid care duties of over 50 hours a week are significantly higher (8%) than the London average. While it is unclear from the census data how many young people are involved in care giving, from the interviews it seems that this is an issue for a significant minority of young people in the borough. This has obvious ramifications for the educational careers of these young carers. Dealing with

formal education on top of the hours spent caring for family members would put extreme pressure on these young people and would make involvement in HE difficult.

Health and Provision of Unpaid Care			
	Barking and Dagenham	London	England
People with a limiting long-term illness	19.86%	15.49%	17.93%
People of working age with a limiting long-term illness	15.97%	11.87%	13.29%
General health: Good	65.49%	70.82%	68.76%
General health: Fairly good	23.79%	20.9%	22.21%
General health: Not good	10.71%	8.28%	9.03%
All people who provide unpaid care: 1-19 hours a week	58.93%	68.53%	68.64%
All people who provide unpaid care: 20-49 hours a week	13.42%	11.93%	10.88%
All people who provide unpaid care: 50 or more hours a week	27.65%	19.54%	20.48%

Table 8: Health and the provision of unpaid care in Barking and Dagenham
Source: National Statistics

In terms of the general health of residents, and particularly young people, there are two initiatives in place by the Local Authority that seek to address health issues. Firstly, the borough will provide free healthy option school meals to all children in the first two years of their schooling. It is intended that this will help to establish healthier eating patterns and reduce childhood obesity. Secondly, it is intended that the borough will provide free leisure facility access to all under 16 year olds to encourage physical activity in this cohort. (LBBD, 2009:6).

4.10.2 Learning Difficulties, Disabilities and Dyslexia

There is a significant population of young people with disabilities in the borough – these groups are catered for via a special school, as well as in other secondary schools, and many of this cohort go on to a wide variety of HE, and particularly FE courses. Data collection in this area makes it difficult to assess these numbers as many disabilities are not reported. However, in 2008 it was found that 21.4% of all children in the borough have special education needs (Barking and Dagenham PCT 2009:41), as can be seen in table 9.

Special Education Need (SEN)	21.4%
SEN School Action	14.9%
SEN School Action Plus	4.2%
SEN Statemented	2.3%

Table 9: Special Education Needs of Young People in the Borough
Source: Barking and Dagenham PCT, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2009

While the overall figure for SEN is high for the borough, most SEN learners are categorised as School Action, whereby the school recognises the learning difficulties, and will provide for this via different teaching methods, and perhaps extra tutoring support. If the learner does not make adequate progress with these additional measures, then the school can ask the LEA for further assistance – hence School Action Plus. If the learner's needs cannot be met by either of these measures, then the learner may be assessed and statemented.

A number of young learners with disabilities were interviewed about their educational experiences. The following is from a discussion with two learners with disabilities.

I: Is there anything you'd like to say about school?

YP4: I been bullied, I been bullied at school.

I: Were you bullied at school?

YP4: In my primary school

YP2: Me too I was bullied at school

YP4: I was... it was cos I was at a school... and I had someone sit with me – a tutor – every lesson and they used to think I cheated on most of my lessons cos I had someone sit with me so I was always bullied about that cos they thought I was cheating in every lesson.

I: Did the teachers try to explain your needs to the other students?

YP4: Yeah – but they didn't care – so when I walked down the corridors all I got was "you cheat, you cheat, you cheat". But that's when my mum moved me out and moved me to Trinity. It was good there cos everybody was the same.

I: It was better at Trinity?

YP4: Yeah even though I didn't get the stuff I needed to learn well.

I: What do you mean?

YP4: Like the teachers –with reading and writing, cos there were [others] less able than me so they (the teachers) focussed on them.

Focus Group Conversation

Attending the special school was a problem for a young female learner with disabilities:

YP3: I have dyslexia and hearing problems.

I: Did you get help with that at school?

YP3: At my secondary school I did cos I went to Trinity but I didn't learn much.

Focus Group Conversation

While these young learners found it difficult to fit in at secondary schools, they also had problems at the special school as their disabilities were mild in comparison to their peers, and they felt that they were left out. However, through the interviews with this group it was also found that many of these young people went into FE courses – one female learner with disabilities had completed a number of courses. However, from interviewing key experts in the field, it was suggested that for these groups, College

becomes a place to *–get them out of the house for a bit*¹², and is not seen as a serious pursuit that might lead to employment. Indeed through the interviews it was suggested that many families with young disabled learners need to be educated about the possibilities for their children, as many could take advantage of HE, but many parents do not consider this a possibility.

Other milder forms of learning difficulty, including Dyslexia were also found to be prevalent through the borough. However problems were found in the way this was handled and assessed.

I have dyslexia and it has taken all year to get them to test me so I can get help in my exams. In the end I had to go to Barking College to get tested there, for them to ring up my school and for me to get the head of the consortium to get involved and so with all of that stress and worry and no help from anybody it kind of put me off.

Comments from Focus group

During interviews with colleagues at Barking College, UEL and Havering College the topic of Dyslexia came up, many staff were surprised at the numbers of unassessed Dyslexic students who arrive at these institutions. It seems that schools are not fully equipped to deal with basic dyslexic assessments. The prevalence of this condition and the increased understanding around it means that this should not be a barrier to success in education.

4.11 Recommendations:

- Blanket Dyslexia testing of all young people in the borough through the school system. Havering College use an online initial assessment of 10 questions to identify potential Dyslexics. These learners could then be referred for further more complete testing.

¹² Key informant interview

5 Locals' Views of the area

While statistical analysis of the area is fruitful, it does not provide the fine grain detail of an area. Despite the deprivation, life expectancy and other statistics, many respondents express a sense of pride for their community and local area. However, many others do not.

In terms of the findings from the qualitative data, the question of contentment with one's local environment and community was the one area where we received a mixed response ranging from absolute disgust at the area and strong desires to move out to attitudes expressing resident's love for their locale.

How an area is perceived by its inhabitants is important. Place-making is not just about physical manifestations and regeneration, but about perceptions, views and attitudes. Through the research we found that some differing attitudes towards the borough can be accounted for by new communities having a slightly higher propensity towards positive views of the borough. More settled groups felt less positive. However, this is not accountable along ethnic lines, with no perceived differences between ethnic communities.

Some residents expressed concern over the breakdown of community in the area. People claimed that there was little respect for each other, and that there are some cliques in the area.

No one knows people anymore, no one wants to know. It is easier not to talk to people

I have been here for 10 years and hated it when I came here. But I made friends through school and the children

Comments from Well London Interviews

From the young people themselves there were equally mixed views about their area. Many young people expressed concern about crime in the area – in particular gang violence and stabbings.¹³ While this anti-social and criminal activity is an issue (and will be dealt with separately in following sections), this concern has been echoed by young people throughout London. While Barking and Dagenham does certainly have its share of what can be best described as youth gangs (modelled on the US style, down to wearing colours, and gang names like bloods and crips) most of the activity in Barking and Dagenham is best described as consisting of crews and postcode rivalries to distinguish these groups from generational, organised criminal gangs. That is not to say that this finding should be taken lightly – many of these gangs form through school and other social networks, and they intimidate and prey on other young people in the borough.

I: What's the worst thing about living in Barking and Dagenham?

YP: The stabbings.

Filmed interview with young learners

¹³ This was by far the most common answer to the question – ~~what~~ is the worst thing about going to school in the borough" from the Barking College questionnaires.

Responses from the interviews and from the questionnaires highlighted this issue.

Question on Barking College questionnaire: What was the worst thing about going to school in Barking and Dagenham?

YP: It's a horrible area and a lot of stabbings and other things going on lately.

However other young people's responses were more positive, but this was sometimes in comparison with other areas.

I: What's it like living in Barking and Dagenham?

YP1: It's OK, alright really.

YP2: Compared with Hackney, it's OK. I do see crimes in the area, but it's OK, it's alright... I feel safe in the area, but that's compared with Hackney.

YP3: It's OK, it has a good points and bad. Good position for getting into London – the facilities are OK – like Parks and swimming pools.

Interview with young learners at Havering College

The main complaints from young people, aside from crime and anti-social behaviours, pointed to the fact that there is very little to do for certain groups of young people in the area. This is confirmed through the responses of many interviewees at Havering College, who represent a significant proportion of residents who live in the borough, but who use the educational, leisure and retail facilities of adjoining boroughs. Many of the Havering College interviewees followed this pattern.

I: What's it like living in Barking and Dagenham?

YP4: It's OK, - but I don't stay in the borough. I don't feel like I live in Barking and Dagenham as I do everything in Havering.

YP5: It's OK. But I don't use the facilities in Barking and Dagenham; I tend to go outside of the borough. I go to Romford for the cinema and shops. I might use the swimming pool in Dagenham – but that's about it – I always spend my nights out in Romford.

Interview with young learners at Havering College

There are underlying issues here around the provision of leisure, retail and other facilities in Barking and Dagenham. It is true that leisure facilities are lacking in the borough and many rely on neighbouring Romford for their leisure time activities. This is a problem for the local economic development of Barking and Dagenham, as well as for its reputation. Because of its position and good transportation the level to which residents treat the borough as a sleeper borough, or dormitory borough (where residents simply live there, but have their lives, work and social lives somewhere else), was not tested through this research, but would be a useful area to examine with further research.

5.1 Young People in Barking & Dagenham

The key umbrella organisation in the borough that oversees the delivery of services for young people and children in Barking and Dagenham is the Children's Trust. The trust consists of a number of organisations including representatives from the PCT, the Local Authority, police, schools and third sector organisations. The trust is responsible for local policy that relates to young people, in particular the *Barking and Dagenham Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009*. The recent policy priorities for young people follow from the Every Child Matters agenda, the Children's act, and the 14-19 Skills white paper following the Tomlinson report are outlined below to provide the context within which the examination of Barking & Dagenham's local policy priority is outlines.

The Children's Act (2004) establishes five areas of priority for children and young people. These five areas are:

- **Be healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.
- **Stay safe:** being protected from harm and neglect.
- **Enjoy and achieve:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.
- **Make a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not committing crime or behaving antisocially.
- **Achieve economic wellbeing:** not letting financial disadvantage prevent children and young people from achieving their full potential in life. (HM Govt, 2004)

Barking and Dagenham embed these priorities in to their children's plan, as *The Children's Act 2004* gives local authorities and partners a duty to work together to achieve these aims. The *Barking and Dagenham Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009* outlines how these aims will be delivered.

The plan goes on to provide in detail the ambitions for the local authority in terms of a number of priorities including looked after children, achievement in schools, reaching national targets set for educational attainment, school attendance, social and leisure activities for young people, youth offending and behaviour, and details how the local authority will meet the 14-19 year olds skills and employment agendas.

5.2 Youth Cultures

Through the research we discovered a variety of youth cultures and young people enjoying a wide array of leisure based opportunities both in the borough, and in adjoining boroughs. One key area that united many of the young people's descriptions of their lives in the borough is characterised by peer group friendships. These are seen by young people as highly important. When Barking College students were asked what was the best thing about going to school in Barking and Dagenham 62 out of the 125 respondents (nearly 50%) stated that the best thing was the social side of school, and —mates”.

“The best thing that I liked about my school was that everyone around me was very friendly.”

“I liked the atmosphere and being around so many of my close friends.”

"Most of my childhood friends went to the same school as me so when it came to lunchtime I was never lonely, I was always with someone."

"Being able to meet friends daily."

"The fact that I met my friends and have good memories with them."

"Coming to see my friends and learn."

"Seeing all my mates, and having a laugh."

"I liked being able to spend time with friends and getting to know new people and mixing with other classes."

Individual responses from the Barking College Survey

The importance of friendships and peer groups to young people is common knowledge, however in Barking and Dagenham this seems to take on an increased importance. Here, kinship structures of extended family and friends were reported throughout the interviews. Three generations of families are reported to still live in the same street and maintain close contact. Family units, extending over a number of households, were felt to be especially pronounced in Dagenham (as opposed to Barking), which has seen more newcomers to the area.

5.2.1 Things for young people to do

Some young people pointed out that there was little for them to do in the borough, and this was felt most keenly by those aged 16 and 17. Members of this age group who were interviewed suggested that they occupied a territory that was between childhood and adulthood, and one where there were very few services directed at them. For example, the interviews with young people revealed that they wanted to be able to congregate and hang out in pubs, as a place to go and be with friends. They did not want to drink alcohol there (although they were forthcoming about their alcohol consumption at home, or in parks or at parties) but simply wanted a space to be themselves.

However, we identified many activities aimed at young people. There are a number of youth clubs in the area, two youth theatre groups, and at least two dance organisations. There are also a variety of provided activities around music production, DJing, and a wide array of sporting opportunities. There are also very active Scouting groups in the area.

Indeed some young people held the view that there was enough to do. One 16 year old male described his typical week:

I: Is there much to do in the Borough?

M3: yeah I think there is - I don't stop all week. Monday I'll just be just out and about, Tuesdays I go to a drama club, Wednesdays I come here, Thursdays I go to the Duke of Edinburgh, Fridays I go to my youth club, Saturdays and Sundays I have to myself.

From focus group

However, not all locales in the borough are as well provided for activities as others. From the Well London research in an LSOA in the Heath ward, young people talked of the conflict over sporting facilities.

I go to the court by the shops to play football, but it is always full (30-40 people sometimes)

Interview from Well London

This has also caused friction with other local residents:

Residents have put a petition to get the ball court closed because they are disturbed by the noise and children gathering there.

Interview from Well London

Indeed, there were reports of intergenerational conflict in the borough, and many older residents are seen by young people to be anti-youth.

5.2.2 Intergenerational conflict

Older community are very anti-kids.

The elderly don't let kids play football anywhere anymore.

Young people are actually really nice. They are so polite. First, I was afraid but now that I know them they are so lovely. Society puts them down and they are not as bad as people say. It would be great for young people to help out the little ones. That will make our communities better.

Interview from Well London

Despite this positive comment many residents, both young and old, talked about the problems involved in intergenerational mixing, that there are some young and old people who do not get along. However, this has been recognised and steps are being taken to resolve this conflict.

Yes, the older population still have issues about the way they think young people are not respectful – the council is combating this via inter-generational activities like an IT course where young people (actually they were young offenders) teach older people to use computers. Another initiative had young people teach the old residents some street dance.

Key Informant Interview

5.2.3 Gangs and Anti-Social Behaviours

As discussed earlier, many young people are aware of anti-social behaviour in their area, as well as of the more serious criminal activity and violence that go along with gang culture. This kind of behaviour goes beyond bullying (of which there is some small indication in the borough); the psychological impact of these kinds of threats on young people needs to be examined. Problematically, as these young people have no

experience of life being otherwise, they are surprised to find that a generation ago, youth stabbings were infrequent or non-existent. From an interview with a parent:

My girls know a lot of boys who have been stabbed and see it as normal – they asked me „Didn’t people get stabbed when you were at school?“

Interview with parent of young learners in the borough

The tragedy of youth violence in London has become almost commonplace; however various local and city wide campaigns are making an impact here. Locally, the Arc youth theatre has been staging theatre performances in schools with anti knife crime themes. These have been very successful, and along with London wide interventions such as the increase of community police, and police at schools, decreases have been reported in this kind of activity.

5.2.4 Drug use

One of the main concerns related to youth anti-social behaviour is the amount of drug use by young people in the borough. Many of the interviewees were forthcoming about their own drug use, which for the most part consisted of cannabis, and alcohol. Smoking cigarettes by young people is also rife.

Big issue, everybody is smoking weed. Boys 15 years old, they smoke weed as you smoke cigarettes

Well London Interview

School used to be alright, we liked it but not for the right reasons. It was OK when we got high on weed in the mornings.

Interview with Young Person in the borough

Comments made about the local police, and the community police, included positive comments made by young people.

Police are doing a good job - they are around a lot at school

Police make jokes - they try to really get on with us

Well London Interview

5.2.5 Representation of Young People

One key concern expressed by a number of young people through the focus groups and interviews was the way in which young people are represented in the media. Many young people felt that they were stereotyped, and some spoke of experiences on buses and trains where they felt they were being judged just because of the way they dressed (in a hoodie).

We are judged by people

People see us as nothing

People look at me as if I want to do something - if I wear a hoodie they look at me as if I was a bad guy

Well London Interview

This was verified through the research process. The following is from a focus group – however many of the young people we interviewed also volunteered this kind of information.

How do you feel about the media portrayal of young people?

YP1: It makes me laugh. It does it makes me laugh.

YP2: I've had a few people come to me and ask is my school as bad as they say? I say go there and find out. They compare schools and because of what's been said in the newspapers they judge.

YP3: They judge all teenagers by what one does. It's the minority.

Comments from Focus group

This stereotyping of young people happens not just locally, but is persistent nationally. Even a cursory glance at headlines in the national press would confirm the idea that young people are being demonised. Local press however, often show a different side. Through this research the team has been impressed by the number of local press stories in the *Barking and Dagenham Post* that celebrate young people's achievements.

Through encouragement of young people and highlighting their many achievements this stereotyping problem can be addressed. The extent to which the feeling of being stereotyped, and how that might lead to self labelling has not been explored in this research. However, we feel that a local study around the effects (and affects) of this would add to our understanding of how young people in local areas construct their identities as they move into adulthood.

5.3 Recommendations

- Local Press have an important contribution to make in disseminating the success and achievements of young learners in the borough and should be encouraged to continue to promote the achievements of young people in the borough.
- Initiatives by the LA to promote young people's achievements should also continue, e.g. Southwark Council recently displayed billboard signs wishing its young people good luck in GCSE and other exams. This could be replicated in Barking and Dagenham.

6 The Educational Landscape

There are 49 Primary schools, 9 secondary schools, and one special school in the borough (Trinity Special School). Alongside this there is Barking College, a Further Education College that also provides HE courses, and the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham. The borough is also served by institutions in neighbouring local authorities – Havering College of Further and Higher Education has a number of students from Barking and Dagenham (for 2008/2009 enrolments this is approximately 890 learners – the bulk of which are studying at level 3). CEME, the Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence is located close to the borough in Rainham, and is a partnership between Ford, the LDA, Havering College of Further and Higher Education, Barking College, and the regeneration body London Riverside Ltd. The closest university to the borough is the University of East London, with campuses at Docklands and Stratford, in Newham. Some 58% of schools (including primary schools) have achieved healthy school status.

	Children's Centres	Pre-School	Day Nursery	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Special Schools	Colleges
North	2	3	0	4	1	0	0
Central	2	3	2	13	1	0	0
West	2	2	2	5	1	0	0
South West	2	1	2	7	1	0	0
East	2	2	3	9	3	1	1
South East	4	2	3	11	2	0	0
Total	14	13	12	49	9	1	1

Table 10: Educational facilities in the borough by area
Source: Barking and Dagenham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, B&D PCT and Tribal, 2009

6.1 Secondary Schools

The nine secondary schools in the borough are:

- All Saints Catholic School and Technology College
- Barking Abbey School
- Dagenham Park Community School
- Eastbrook Comprehensive School
- Eastbury Comprehensive School
- Jo Richardson Community School
- Robert Clack School
- Sydney Russell Comprehensive School
- Warren Comprehensive School

Many of the secondaries in the borough are specialist schools, and all have 6th forms. The latest Ofsted reports show that the quality of schools in the borough varies. All schools are graded as being at least satisfactory (including their 6th forms). Four of the nine schools are outstanding, one is good, and the other four are satisfactory. Secondary schools' sixth forms in the borough are grouped into consortia which allow sixth form learners to move between schools to study particular subjects. Reports from the young people themselves attest to the success of the consortia in delivering a

wider range of A-level subjects than single school offers, and there was no reported scheduling problems, or issues with travel time between schools.

The North Consortium includes the schools: Robert Clack, All Saints, Eastbrook and Warren. The South Consortium includes: Sydney Russell, Eastbury, Dagenham Park and Jo Richardson. Barking Abbey has a large number of 6th form students, and as such, is not part of a consortia structure. When talking to young learners about this structure, the responses were positive.

I am studying A-levels in Chemistry, Biology and Psychology at both Sydney Russell and Jo Richardson. I want to be a forensic scientist. The travel time is fine, and everything fits with my schedule really well.

Interview with young learner

These consortia are reasonably new structures, at least in their formal arrangement. They came out of a looser collaboration in the past, and currently have the same schedules over the school day and offer a strong joint curriculum. Over the coming years, there will be moves to an even higher level of integration. These consortia are supplemented in their activities via a virtual sixth form with a Principal and Vice-Principal. The Vice-principals are directly responsible for the achievement of all sixth form learners. Alongside this there is a consortia website to further this partnership arrangement. The main purpose of the consortia is to extend curricula activity, however a priority for the consortia is to increase achievement.

For example, the Southern consortium – looks at quality in A level teaching across the borough – e.g. if physics is not taught well – they will commission internally for those giving the best qualification – achievement will be pushed this way.

Interview with head teacher

Although the consortia structure is reasonably new, from the interviews and other sources (such as Ofsted inspection reports) this arrangement is already working well, and is expected to see real gains in the next few years.

6.1.1 Secondary School Overview

Through the research we found vastly different experiences of school expressed by young learners in the borough. These differences were most pronounced between schools, but some problems with the quality of provision was even found between subject areas within schools. While the consortia arrangement has widened curricula for 6th form learners, these inequalities of secondary education provision remain.

It is not for this research to “name and shame” particular schools, this is contrary to what this research sets about to do. However, the differences between schools warrants some comment. It was decided that this would be done mainly via Ofsted inspection reports and League tables. All this information is publicly available and in practice these are the sources many young people and their families use when choosing schools. It must be noted that between the last two inspections, all schools in the borough have improved. This should be applauded, and given the mechanisms now in place at secondary schools in the borough (including the consortia arrangement as well as ancillary enrichment activities) it is expected that this improvement will continue.

However, one potential problem for the borough was raised by one interviewee who works within the LA. They suspect that the borough will lose 75% of its head teachers over the next 5 years as many heads will be reaching retirement age. While in isolation this may not be an issue, for Barking and Dagenham it may well be, as traditionally the borough has found it difficult to recruit new teachers and heads. This is not exclusively a problem for Barking and Dagenham. Many schools experience recruitment difficulties in urban centres in London.

It's not easy for B&D to recruit teachers and heads because it is seen as a deprived area, and predominately working class.

Key Expert interview

There are a number of national government initiatives to counter this. As outlined in the New Opportunities White Paper, developing a world-class teaching profession is a policy priority. While the numbers entering teaching have risen since 1997, and have recently seen a significant increase attributed to the recession, attracting quality teaching staff is still a particular problem for schools in areas that are socio-economically disadvantaged. Indeed, schools in these areas face higher staff turnover, greater recruitment problems (particularly in Maths and Science), and higher numbers of temporary staff." (HM Government, 2009:52) Having recognised this need, the New Opportunities White Paper outlines the national response by Government:

To encourage more of the most effective teachers to apply to challenging schools we will guarantee that from September 2009 all eligible schools will have access to a package of support for new appointments, including:

- A "golden handcuff" of £10,000 payable in return for three years' service in a single participating school;
- For Newly-Qualified teachers and new Heads of Department from 2010-2011, eligibility to access the new Masters in Teaching and Learning;
- And access to a network of teachers from other participating schools to share effective practice." (HM Government, 2009:53)

This, alongside other national initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future, the extended schools agenda, and others are expected to continue to contribute to the improvements in teaching and learning at secondary schools in the area.

The table below (table 11) breaks down the numbers of young learners at different secondary schools in the borough. (Trinity Special School is not included in the table).

School	Learner Numbers
The Warren Comprehensive School	958
Barking Abbey School, A Specialist Sports and Humanities College [Sp]	1,096
Dagenham Park Community School [Sp]	788
Eastbrook Comprehensive School	1,121
Eastbury Comprehensive School [Sp]	1,351
Robert Clack School [Sp]	1,324
The Sydney Russell School [Sp]	1,355
Jo Richardson Community School [Sp]	1,038
All Saints Catholic School and Technology College [Sp, R]	640

Table 11: the numbers of young learners at different secondary schools in the borough
Source: HESA figures

6.1.2 All Saints Catholic School and Technology College

All Saints Catholic School and Technology College is a Comprehensive, Voluntary aided, mixed gendered school whose pupils range in age from 11 to 18. It is a specialist school, with a technology specialism. It is a Roman Catholic school, with a Christian ethos. As such it is the only religious school in the borough. The school is situated in Heath ward, which has one LSOA in the top 10% most deprived, and one in the top 20% most deprived in the country.¹⁴ Despite this, the school is rated Outstanding for overall effectiveness by Ofsted at their last inspection in June 2007. The 6th form college fares almost as well, and is rated Good in the inspection report. The Ofsted report highlights the school's "culture of success for all" (Ofsted, 2007) and the quality of teaching present. The school encourages students' and parents' views, and involves these groups in decision making. In terms of achievement, students make exceptional progress through years 10-11. Overall, this excellent achievement record is evident by the fact that the school is in the top 1% nationally for student progress. (Ofsted, 2007). In 2006, 92% of year 11 students achieved at least 5 A* to C passes at GCSE level. Including Maths and English, these results are above the national average.

In 2009, according to the league tables, All Saints Catholic School and Technology College had 177 14 to 16 year olds, with 56% of students achieving 5 A* to C passes at GCSE level (including Maths and English), and 71 % achieving these grades in all subjects. The value added score¹⁵ for the school is 1011.4, and the A-level score per student is 627.4.¹⁶ (*The Independent*, 2009)

6.1.3 Barking Abbey School

Barking Abbey School is a specialist Sports and Humanities College. It is a Comprehensive, Community, mixed gender school with pupils of ages 11-19. It is situated in Longbridge ward, which is the least deprived ward in the borough. It is the ward with the highest average income in the borough, with an average of £33,658 – approximately £5,000 higher than the borough average (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009). Despite this, there are an above average proportion of students who are entitled to free school meals. The school also has a higher number of pupils from BME backgrounds than average (Ofsted, Sept 2008) Barking Abbey school is a large school, and is not involved in a 6th form consortia due to the high numbers of its own 6th form pupils. It has the second lowest percentage of pupils attending from within the borough – and has nearly 20% of students attending from other boroughs, including 193 pupils from Redbridge.¹⁷

Barking Abbey has a particular reputation for its gifted and talented programmes, and has won a plethora of awards including Sportsmark Gold, Investors in People and the Basic Skills Agency Charter Mark. (Ofsted, Sept 2008). In its most recent Ofsted report the school was graded Outstanding, and its 6th form effectiveness was also graded Outstanding.

¹⁴ Index of Multiple Deprivation, National Statistics 2004

¹⁵ The value added score is a number that predicts what pupils should achieve as they arrive at the school at age 11. If pupils improve, the score is over 1000. If they do not improve and fall behind their predicted performance this number will be below 1000.

¹⁶ The A-level average point score takes into account all A level qualifications gained by students. An A grade A level is worth 270 points, a B is worth 240, C is worth 210, a D is worth 180, and an E is worth 150.

¹⁷ Figures from DCSF and National Statistics 2008

One innovation the school has introduced is that it teaches Key Stage 3 over two years, instead of the usual three. Pupils' standards in year 8 are on par with national standards of year 9 students. The advantage here is that GCSE studies are taken over three years, instead of the usual two. (Ofsted, Sept 2008). As a result the 2009 league table results show that with 261 14 to 16 year olds, 64% of pupils achieved A* to C passes at GCSE level (including Maths and English), the best results in the borough. With all subjects, this percentage rises to 77%. The value added score of the school is 1009.7, and the A-level point score per student is 666.2. (*The Independent*, 2009)

6.1.4 Dagenham Park Community School

Dagenham Park Community School is a specialist arts' college located in the River ward, neighbouring Village ward. The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that one of the LSOAs in this ward falls within the 10% most deprived, with three other LSOAs in the 20% most deprived.¹⁸ The numbers of students at Dagenham Park Community School who are eligible for free school meals is triple the national average. The school has above average numbers of pupils with a learning difficulty, and just under half have a home language other than English. (Ofsted Nov 2008) The latest Ofsted inspection reveals that Dagenham Park is a satisfactory and improving school. The student body enter with lower than average attainment levels, and progress through years 7 to 9 is limited due to underdeveloped verbal skills. (Ofsted Nov 2008). Although the school is graded satisfactory, the inspection report highlights that the school is improving, and cites many new initiatives in place to improve learner attainment. As a specialist arts school, there are a number of arts based activities for pupils. There is also a variety of vocational and academic courses that are based on the arts specialism, particularly around performing arts. Around two thirds of pupils go on to the 6th form.

The school is attended by 186 14 to 16 year olds, and 33% achieved five A* to C grades in their GCSEs including Maths and English, while 46% achieved these grades in all subjects. The value added score of the school is 1010.5, and the A-level point score per pupil is 563.2. (*The Independent*, 2009)

6.1.5 Eastbrook Comprehensive School

Eastbrook Comprehensive School is a comprehensive, community, mixed gender school, located in Eastbrook ward. Eastbrook has one of the highest Jobseekers claimant figures at 30%. From the Ofsted report, attainment in year 7 is average, however by Year 12 this is lower than average as many students choose alternative educational institutions after school leaving age. In September 2005, after inspection, the school was put into special measures. The latest school inspection however, in July 2007 deemed that there was no longer any need for the special measures, as it was found that the school has improved dramatically. For example Key Stage 3 results have improved significantly and the quality of teaching and learning is now deemed satisfactory.

In terms of the 6th form offer this is small, however Eastbrook is in the Northern Consortium which allows its pupils to study a wider range of A-level and other subjects. The 6th form received a grade of 3 in the latest report, which deems this satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the consortia arrangements had just been implemented and as a result the inadequate progress by Year 12 students in the past (due to a lack of suitable courses) has now been reversed due to the availability of subjects at different schools. (Ofsted, July 2007).

¹⁸ Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, National statistics

The school is attended by 275 pupils who are between 14 and 16, and the GCSE results show that only 27% of students achieved 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English. This is the lowest result in the borough. When including all subjects, the GCSE results are 41% of students achieving 5 A* to C grades. Again, this is the lowest in the borough. Accordingly the Value added score for the school is 972.4, (the lowest in the borough) and the A-level point score per pupil is 563.2. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.6 Eastbury Comprehensive School

Eastbury Comprehensive School is a mixed gender comprehensive community school situated in the Longbridge ward, which is west of the borough and shares a boundary with Redbridge. As established earlier, Longbridge is one of the least deprived wards in the borough. Eastbury School is a short distance away from Barking Abbey Secondary College; however the two schools show vast differences in terms of their achievement records. At Eastbury nearly half the students are from BME backgrounds and approximately a third of the students do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of students who receive school meals is above average, and these numbers are rising, as are numbers of students with learning difficulties. (Ofsted, May 2007). The school's specialism is mathematics and computing.

Overall the school was rated satisfactory in the last Ofsted report, which also points out that the school is improving, and has significant strengths. These include good use of ICT to enhance lessons, and the delivery of the school's specialism in ICT has been good. (Ofsted, May 2007). The sixth form is also rated satisfactory, and with the consortia arrangement is seen to be improving. The school has 250 pupils aged 14-16, and the last results indicated that 32% of students achieved 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English, with 42% of students achieving these grades in all subjects. This last result is the second lowest in the borough. The value added score for the school is 993.7 – one of three schools in the borough which have this score below 1,000. In terms of the A-level point score per pupil, this is 640.6 – the third highest in the borough. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.7 Jo Richardson Community School

Jo Richardson Community School is a mixed gender comprehensive with pupils aged 11-19. It is situated in Thames ward, on the border of Goresbrook ward. Thames ward contains much industrial and brown field land and is where the Barking Reach regeneration developments are taking place. This is one of the largest regeneration areas in the Thames Gateway and will see homes built for 26,000 people together with community facilities. These include plans for a new secondary school and 2 new primary schools.

This school is a specialist mixed mathematics and music college, and it opened in 2002. At the time of the Ofsted inspection, the school had more boys than girls, and an above average proportion of students with learning difficulties. The 6th form is new, when inspected in 2008, there were no results for Year 13. The overall effectiveness of the school in 2008 was graded Outstanding, with the 6th form assessed as Good. In particular, communication with parents is seen to be excellent. There are also a number of enrichment activities and school visits that enhance the students' experience of this school. (Ofsted, Nov 2008)

The school has 178 students between the age of 14-16 and 39% achieved 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English, with 53% of students achieving these grades in all subjects. The schools value added score is 1027.8. As the 2008/2009 academic year is the first to have Year 13s, there is not yet an A-level points per student score. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.8 Robert Clack School

Robert Clack School is a community comprehensive with mixed gender students and it is a specialist science college, with a recent new specialism in mathematics and computing. Robert Clack is located in both Heath and Whalebone wards as it has two campuses. The school is located alongside All Saints Catholic School and Technology College. Whalebone ward has the lowest percentage of Local Authority maintained households, and the borough's highest life expectancy. Unemployment rates are also below the borough average. Heath ward, on the other hand, has one LSOA in the top 10% of deprived areas according to the IMD of 2004. There are higher than borough average numbers claiming benefits, mainly incapacity and lone parent's benefits. (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009). The majority of students at the school are white British, with a larger than average percentage of students eligible for free school meals. There are also higher than average student numbers with learning difficulties and learning disabilities. In the most recent Ofsted report the overall effectiveness of the school was graded as outstanding. One issue that has been noticed by management was that girls who achieve above level 4 in the national tests taken at 11 years old, and students whose first language is not English, do not do as well as other students. There are strategies now in place to address these discrepancies. (Ofsted, Dec 2007). Both teaching and learning have been deemed outstanding and there are extra-curricular activities that the students benefit from.

The 6th form has also been graded as outstanding. In 2005 the standards on entry to the 6th form were below national average, however they achieved higher than national averages on the completion of their 6th form studies. (Ofsted, Dec 2007). The school is well known in the borough for its links with Russell Group universities, and data from the interviews found that a small number of students from the school have been accepted into Cambridge University.

The school has 257 students between the ages of 14 and 16, and the GCSE results show that 40% of students achieved 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English, with 80% of students achieving these grades in all subjects. The last figure is the highest in the borough. The schools value added score is 1052.2 and the A-level points per student score is an impressive 813.8 – by far the highest in the borough. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.9 Sydney Russell Comprehensive School

Sydney Russell Comprehensive School is a comprehensive community school with mixed gender students, aged 11 to 19. It is situated in Parsloes ward which has a rate of Working Age Benefits claimants which is slightly higher than the borough average. (Barking and Dagenham PCT 2009). Parsloes has one LSOA in the 10% most deprived nationally in terms of the Education, Skills and Training deprivation indicator.¹⁹ Sydney Russell is part of the southern consortium of 6th forms – with Eastbury, Dagenham Park and Jo Richardson. The school is large with numbers of

¹⁹ Index of Multiple Deprivation data 2004, National Statistics

students eligible for free school meals and BME numbers well above national averages. The school also has a number of students who are refugees or asylum seekers. Although the numbers of students with learning difficulties is “broadly average” a centre for students on the autistic spectrum has been established at the school. (Ofsted, Nov 2008b) The schools’ specialist status is in media arts.

The last Ofsted inspection report identified that the school is Good in terms of its overall effectiveness. It also is improving and according to inspectors has improved considerably since the last inspection in 2005, and achievements in ICT have been outstanding. The 6th form is also graded Good, with particularly high standards achieved in Media studies. (Ofsted, Nov 2008b) There are 262 students here between the ages of 14-16 and 34% of these achieved 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English, with 65% of students achieving these grades in all subjects. The schools value added score is 1013.2 and the A-level points per student score is 552.2. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.10 Warren Comprehensive School

Warren Comprehensive School is a mixed gender community comprehensive school for learners aged 11 to 18. It is situated in the north of the borough, in Chadwell Heath ward. There are 2 LSOAs in this ward that are within the top 10% most deprived nationally, however most of the populations that are accounted for by these figures live in the large Mark’s Gate Estate, located in the northernmost point of the borough. (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009:8) The school is home to a resource base for students with moderate learning difficulty, and unsurprisingly therefore has a higher than average student population of learners with learning difficulties. The ethnic mix of the school is predominately White British, and has above average numbers of students entitled to free school meals.

In the most recent Ofsted inspection report it was noted that the school has been through a rapid transition and is improving. It has been rated Satisfactory in terms of the overall effectiveness of the school, as well as its 6th form offer, however a lack of enrichment opportunities for 6th form students was noted. The report also noted that in 2006 student progress was among the worst in the country, with white boys performing particularly poorly. (Ofsted Nov 2007) More recently however, student progress has improved. Improvements have also been made in the number of exclusions falling, and the quality of teaching has risen between the last inspections. There are 218 students between the ages of 14 and 16, with 31% of these achieving 5 A* to C grades including Maths and English (the second lowest in the borough), with 51% of students achieving these grades in all subjects. The schools value added score is 994.3 and the A-level points per student score is 584.4. (*The Independent*, 2009).

6.1.11 Overall Secondary Student Numbers in the Borough

Table 12 below shows that although the vast majority of young residents attend secondary school in the borough (83.3%), there is a significant minority who attend school outside the borough. Indeed, Barking and Dagenham is a net exporter of students. Most of these young learners who attend school outside the borough attend fee-paying public schools in adjoining boroughs, as Barking and Dagenham has no independent school provision.

	No of Resident pupils attending secondary schools	% of Resident pupils attending secondary schools	No of Pupils on roll attending secondary schools	% of Pupils on roll in secondary schools resident in LA
Barking and Dagenham	9,671	83.3		
The Warren Comprehensive School	958	8.3	1,107	86.5
Barking Abbey School, A Specialist Sports and Humanities College [Sp]	1,096	9.4	1,363	80.4
Dagenham Park Community School [Sp]	788	6.8	855	92.2
Eastbrook Comprehensive School	1,121	9.7	1,191	94.1
Eastbury Comprehensive School [Sp]	1,351	11.6	1,431	94.4
Robert Clack School [Sp]	1,324	11.4	1,456	90.9
The Sydney Russell School [Sp]	1,355	11.7	1,412	96.0
Jo Richardson Community School [Sp]	1,038	8.9	1,074	96.6
All Saints Catholic School and Technology College [Sp, R]	640	5.5	912	70.2

Table 12: School destinations of learners in Barking and Dagenham
Source: DCSF and National Statistics, 2008

As can be seen in table 13, the highest numbers leave the borough to attend school in Havering (972 students) followed by Redbridge (402), Newham (286) and Tower Hamlets (121). In total 1,929 students in 2008 who were registered in the borough, attended schools outside of Barking and Dagenham.

LA No./ Name	No of Resident pupils attending secondary schools
202 Camden	7
203 Greenwich	3
204 Hackney	21
206 Islington	7
210 Southwark	8
211 Tower Hamlets	121
302 Barnet	4
304 Brent	3
309 Haringey	4
311 Havering	972
316 Newham	286
317 Redbridge	402
320 Waltham Forest	22
881 Essex	43
882 Southend-on-Sea	7
883 Thurrock	8
886 Kent	3
Other LAs	8
Grand Total	1929

Table 13: Numbers of Barking and Dagenham residents attending schools outside the borough
Source: DCSF

Broken down further, in table 14, the figures show that out of the 973 Barking and Dagenham students who attend schools in Havering, 342 of these attend Brittons School and Technology College (a specialist school), which is located just over the Barking and Dagenham border in Havering (slightly east of the ward Village). For many this may be closer than schools in the borough. Together with proximity, school reputations play a large part in school choice. We have seen that many (particularly middle class) families in East London move to more outer boroughs, often because the education offer in these boroughs is perceived to be of a higher quality. Other reasons for this exodus may be based on the desire to attend a grammar school (there are none in Barking and Dagenham), a religious school, or a single sex school, (again, there are only co-ed schools in the borough).

Redden Court School [Sp]	11
Brittons School and Technology College [Sp]	342
The Sanders Draper School and Specialist Science College [Sp]	23
The Chafford School, A Specialist Business and Enterprise College [Sp]	86
The Royal Liberty School [Sp, B]	31
Gaynes School Language College [Sp]	8
The Albany, A Business and Enterprise College [Sp]	87
Bower Park School	25
St Edward's CofE Comprehensive School, Language College and Sixth Form Centre [Sp, R]	184
The Champion School [Sp, B, R]	15
The Frances Bardsley School for Girls [Sp, G]	81
Abbs Cross School and Arts College [Sp]	13
The Coopers' Company and Coborn School [Sp, R]	21
Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School [Sp, G, R]	42

Table 14: Barking and Dagenham young learners who attend schools in Havering
Key: [Gr Grammar] [Sp Specialist] [G Girls] [B Boys] [R Religious Character]
Source: DCSF 2008

6.2 Barking College

Barking College's main campus is at Rush Green, with a number of learners studying at specialised sites such as CEME, and the Broadway theatre. The college has been awarded a CoVE rating in three areas: Care, Construction and Engineering (Mechanical and Motor Vehicle).

The college has learners on a variety of levels, including HE courses, with a small number of students at this level, around 250. The highest curriculum area for HE study is Art and Design, with approximately 110 students. Many of these learners come to HE courses via internal progressions, and while there is no robust statistical data on this, interviewees suggest that this accounts for some 70-80% of HE students. As the college cannot award HE qualifications, many of these are validated by UEL. The MBA is validated by Sunderland University. Colleges' represent good value for money in terms of HE provision, with no top up fees on ordinary programmes, so that HE courses cost £1,250.

Learners from Barking and Dagenham in the 2008/2009 academic year account for approximately 32% of all enrolments. In real student numbers this is approximately 5,847 students. In terms of the demographic breakdown, far more learners are female than male, which certainly reinforces the trend that many more females than males consider continuing their education in the borough. Indeed, the figures break down as

3,249 female learners to 2,598 male learners. This means that 55.5% of Barking and Dagenham students are female, whilst only 44.5% are male. However, when comparing Barking and Dagenham learners to the Barking College learners in terms of their gender, this trend is reversed. Male learners at Barking College from all postcodes constitute 52% of learners, while females constitute only 47%.

The ethnic breakdown of all Barking and Dagenham students at Barking College can be seen in table 15.

Bangladeshi	144
Indian	137
Pakistani	173
Other Asian background	98
African	1092
Caribbean	195
Other Black background	108
Chinese	24
White and Asian	13
White and Black African	82
White and Black Caribbean	107
other Mixed background	34
White - British	2734
White - Irish	38
Other White background	656
Any Other	105
Not Known	107

Table 15: Ethnic Breakdown of Barking College Students from Barking and Dagenham 2008/09
Source: Barking College Student Records

While this is a very diverse group of ethnicities, when condensed into BME and white groups we can see that far more students from the borough belong to white groups (in this analysis this includes White Irish – see table 16). This is interesting as anecdotally, the information coming from the qualitative interviews suggests that BME groups are more likely to go into education. As we shall see later in the analysis of Barking and Dagenham learners at UEL, there are far more BME groups than white groups represented here. So for many white indigenous groups FE or HE at an FE College, rather than at an HEI is the preference. This suggests that FE colleges should take the lead in initiatives designed to attract white indigenous groups, and to encourage them to progression routes to a wide variety of subject areas.

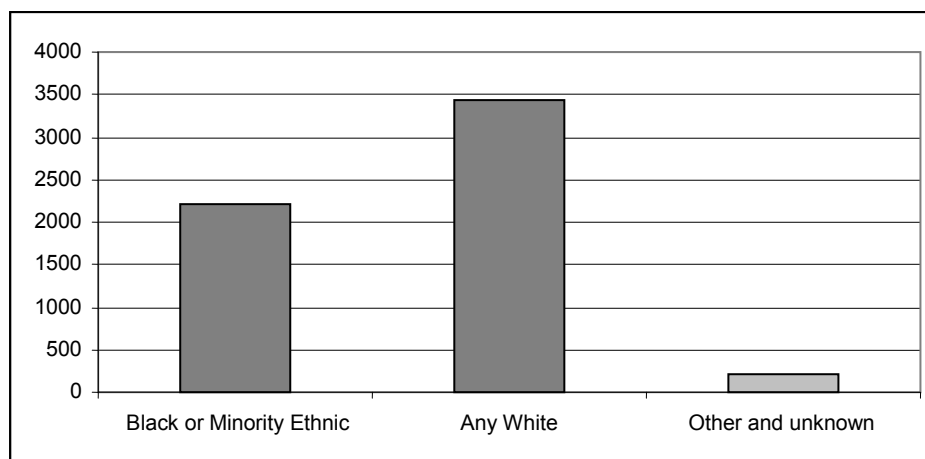


Table 16: Proportions of BME and White groups from Barking and Dagenham at Barking College
Source: Barking College Student Records

Although the College does not have a separate widening participation strategy, it does adhere to its equal opportunities policy, and, as we have seen, has a wide range of students from different ethnicities, and many students with learning and other disabilities. It is particularly known for its work with learners who have hearing difficulties.

In terms of the Barking and Dagenham students with Learning Difficulties, we can see these numbers in the table 17.

Moderate Learning Difficulty	214
Severe Learning Difficulty	7
Dyslexia and Dyscalculia	157
Other Learning Difficulty (including Autism Spectrum Disorder)	26
Multiple Learning Difficulties	15
Other	62
No Learning Difficulty	5314
Info not provided	54

Table 17: Barking and Dagenham students at Barking College with Learning Difficulties in 2008/09
Source: Barking College Student Records

While the vast majority of these learners do not have a learning difficulty, 9% have difficulties with learning. This is in contrast to the 21.4% of all young people borough wide who have Special Education Needs. While these categories do not entirely overlap, there is certainly scope to encourage more of these young learners into FE or HE.

In terms of disabilities the College has the following student numbers of learners from Barking and Dagenham for 2008/09 in table 18.

Visual Impairment	34
Hearing Impairment	20
Disability affecting mobility	28
Other Physical Disability	18
Other Medical Condition	56
Emotional/Behavioural difficulties	14
Mental Health Difficulty	11
Temp Disability after illness	2
Profound Complex Disability	3
Aspergers Syndrome	3
Multiple Disabilities	6
Other Disability	45
No Disability	5544
Not Disclosed	63

Table 18: Barking and Dagenham students at Barking College with Disabilities in 2008/09
Source: Barking College Student Records

Approximately 4% of Barking and Dagenham Students at the college have a disability. When this analysis is made for all Barking College students with disabilities, the percentage of students with disabilities is also approximately 4%, so that learners with disabilities from Barking and Dagenham are represented in similar numbers as from other boroughs.

When examining data regarding student disadvantage we can see that the majority of students from Barking and Dagenham fall into this category. Indeed out of the 5,847 Barking and Dagenham learners, only 1,223 are not eligible for disadvantage uplift, as can be seen in figure 2, below.

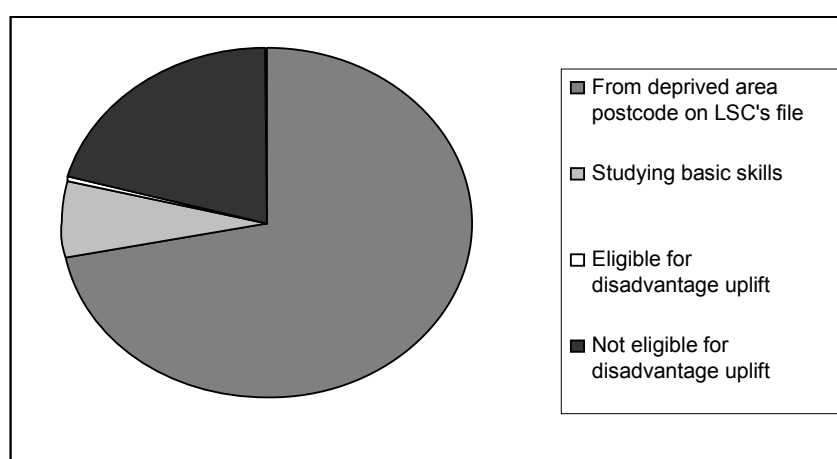


Figure 2: Barking and Dagenham students from disadvantaged backgrounds in 2008/09
Source: Barking College Student Records

The College has a variety of links with other institutions, both locally and across London. The Chelsea College of Art use Barking College's facilities and work with students. Schools in the borough were invited to have sessions with Barking College and Chelsea College; however there was limited take-up of this.²⁰ Also, as part of The Creative Way (a lifelong learning network established around the creative industries, which is a partnership of 44 colleges, HEIs, and training providers in the Thames Gateway) there are progression agreements for students studying relevant arts and creative based subjects.

The college is also running new courses specifically for NEETs in the borough, in conjunction with The Foyer, a new young people's centre with residential accommodation and specialist provision for at risk youth. Courses in Media and Construction have been established, with other subject areas to follow.

6.3 Havering College of Further and Higher Education

Havering College of Further and Higher Education (HCFHE) is the largest FE college in London. Although it is outside the borough, many young learners from Barking and Dagenham attend this college. The College itself has a number of campuses including Ardleigh Green Campus, Quarles Campus, Hillman Close and a partnership facility with CEME. The college also has satellite sites in Brentwood, Rainham, and Redbridge. (Finch, 2009) Like many FE colleges, Havering College offers a broad range of subject areas at many levels. These include basic skills provision, pre-entry, level 3 study (A-Level, BTEC certificates etc), to HE provision in some areas. The college has some 12,000 full time learners. HE provision includes approximately 35 programmes, with further programmes being developed. As FE colleges do not have awarding powers, these courses are validated by HEIs. Many courses are validated by the Open University, others by Greenwich, London South Bank University and The University of East London. (Finch, 2009)

What follows is a discussion of learners from Barking and Dagenham at the College, however for more detailed information, please see the corresponding report developed by the research team at HCFHE as part of this project.²¹

There are approximately 922 learners from Barking and Dagenham at the college. The largest group of these, 310 learners, are studying courses at level three with the majority studying BTEC National Diplomas. The demographic make-up of these learners is of interest, as 49.5% of these are male learners, and 55% of these are White or White British, and 73% of these are aged between 17 and 21. (Finch 2009)

Table 19 shows the level of study by Barking and Dagenham students.

²⁰ Key Informant Interview

²¹ As part of the research for this project, a researcher at the college conducted a number of interviews with Barking and Dagenham learners, and undertook an analysis. See Finch 2009

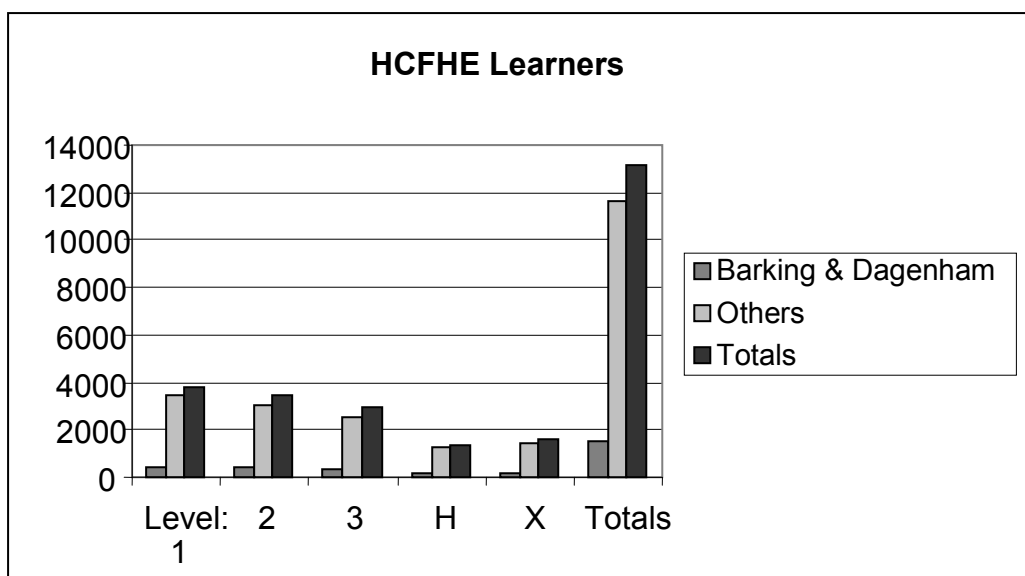


Table 19: Barking and Dagenham Learners 2008-2009 at Havering College of Higher and Further Education

Source: Havering College of Higher and Further Education Student Data

When looking at the ward level data for these students, in table 20, it is clear that these learners are not evenly recruited from all areas of the borough. Indeed, Abbey ward has the fewest of Barking and Dagenham learners at the college, with 1%, while Heath ward has nearly 13%.

Ward	Percent
Abbey	1%
Alibon	7%
Becontree	8%
Chadwell Heath	11%
Eastbrook	7%
Eastbury	5%
Gascoigne	2%
Goresbrook	4%
Heath	13%
Longbridge	4%
Mayesbrook	9%
Parsloes	2%
River	7%
Thames	3%
Valence	5%
Village	6%
Whalebone	8%

Table 20: Barking and Dagenham HE Students at HCHFE by ward

Source: HCHFE Student Data

While the College does not have a WP strategy, it has been noted through this research that learners are diverse in terms of age, ethnicity and previous educational backgrounds as well as geographically diverse. This poses potential challenges to Havering College although ensures that widening participation is an often taken for granted phenomena – that the college attracts such diverse learners is indicative that

widening participation strategies in both recruiting and retaining learners is in operation. There appears therefore a deeply embedded culture of widening participation although articulation of this ethos in terms of specific policies, attitudes and teaching and learning strategies is less tangible.” (Finch, 2009:13)

6.4 School-College-HE Links

From the interviews it was revealed that Schools (particularly those with 6th forms) see Colleges as direct competition for student cohorts aged 16-18. This came up in a number of interviews. This is not a situation that is particular to the borough, but occurs throughout London.

There are however a number of initiatives and links between schools and FE colleges. For example, many young learners who have been excluded from school go to Barking College (and other colleges outside the borough) for their GCSEs, A-Levels and other vocational options. These transitions are not always smooth as evidenced by the interviews below:

A: They said they were going to get me a place in Redbridge College but nothing happened. They chucked me out of school to get this college place and nothing ever happened.

E: Yeah – I was out of school for months and I got a college interview and the college said yeah – we can give you an interview but we don’t have any places...

A: So they don’t really care what we do.

Interview with young learners.

Once enrolled in College, many young learners who perhaps did not have a particularly good experience at school begin to flourish.

How are you finding college compared with school?

YP1: I suppose – I dunno – I’d prefer to go back to school just because of my mates. In college they treat you a lot better – the teachers and that – they treat you like adults – and they don’t talk to you like you’re stupid.

YP2: Yeah I hate that.

YP3: That’s why I’d prefer to go to college rather than school – I can’t stand being spoken to like I’m an idiot.

YP1: And you can smoke at college – you can have fag breaks and that.

YP2: I’d much prefer to go to college.

Focus Group Conversation

These experiences of College – being spoken to like an adult, not having to wear a uniform, and being put in a situation where learners are allowed to direct their own studies were discussed in a number of interviews throughout the research. On the whole, young people in the borough who made the transition from school to college seemed to appreciate the College environment more than school.

“The ones who went to college (friends of my youngest) were all good and enjoyed the experience – I think this is because they were in an environment that treated them like adult learners rather than naughty children.

There’s a pattern emerging – get them out of school and then they will try to achieve”

Interview with parent

Despite the feeling of competition, there are a number of areas where there is good practice of schools working with the colleges. As seen in the above discussion, many students who are not flourishing at school are transferred to college for their studies. In addition, Colleges provide vocational courses for 14-16 year olds. Schools in the area send their students to Barking College for courses in Construction, Painting and Decorating. Barking College handles Diploma provision in conjunction with Dagenham Park School.

Barking College also conducts outreach work at schools, and provides taster days in some schools, mostly in areas where schools think the College is not competitive.²² Barking Abbey also mount a wide range of taster days with the college, as one expert put it, this is –because they are reasonably sure that they will get their 6th formers back.”²³

While some competition might be viewed as healthy, when this competition prevents young learners in Barking and Dagenham from following progression routes offered by Colleges, this becomes a problem. Overall there needs to be more understanding cultivated amongst schools and IAG providers regarding the various progression routes that do not necessarily rely on A-level completion.

6.5 The University of East London

The University of East London is located across two campuses at Docklands in Newham, and at Stratford. It has approximately 14,420 undergraduates and 5,010 postgraduate learners²⁴ studying a wide variety of subjects under the following schools: Architecture and the Visual Arts, Business, Computing Information Technology and Engineering, Education, Health and Biosciences, Law, Psychology, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Many courses have a vocational slant, and the university also runs pre-access courses under its New Beginnings 2 programme which enables learners to prepare for degree level study. In addition to undergraduate programmes UEL also runs a wide range of Master’s courses, PhDs, and Continuing Professional Development programmes. There are also a number of programmes run with partner institutions, such as the degree in Social Enterprise, run from the Bromley-by-Bow centre, and Professional Doctorate programmes in psychology run at the

²² Key Informant Interview

²³ Key Informant Interview

²⁴ HESA figures 20007-2008

Tavistock Centre. The delivery of electronic based learning programmes through UEL Connect is second only to that of the Open University.

UEL achieved university status in 1992, although the history of the university is much older. In 1892 a technical institute was established in West Ham, and in the 1930s Essex County Council established two colleges – one at Dagenham and one at Walthamstow. These colleges merged in the 1970s to form the North East London Polytechnic, which became UEL in 1992.

The University of East London is the most diverse University in the country. The student body represents over 120 countries, 66% of students come from BME backgrounds and over 7% receive the disabled student allowance. (UEL, 2009). UEL has a charter for inclusivity, an equality and diversity policy statement, policy on students with disabilities, and a widening participation strategy. The university has established a Widening Participation Action Group to oversee the WP work.

Table 21 below shows the proportion of Full Time undergraduate EU students with Widening Participation characteristics.

	Students with a disability	Students aged over 30	Students from East London	BME students
2000-1	3.0%	17.8%	46.6%	52.8%
2001-2	4.9%	17.8%	48.0%	54.9%
2002-3	7.1%	18.3%	49.3%	54.1%
2003-4	8.1%	20.4%	49.5%	56.5%
2004-5	5.1%	19.8%	49.3%	56.8%
2005-6	7.4%	20.7%	50.1%	59.4%
2006-7	7.0%	20.7%	52.0%	66.0%

Table 21: UEL Full Time undergraduate EU students with Widening Participation characteristics
Source: UEL OFFA Agreement

These figures are impressive, and continue to grow. In particular, the level of recruitment locally from East London boroughs means that many of the students at the University come from geographically disadvantaged areas, with many pockets of high deprivation. Indeed, HESA data indicates that the university recruits 20% of new entrants, and 33% of mature entrants from the lowest socio-economic classification. (UEL, 2007). Table 22 shows the proportion of all students from these disadvantaged groups at UEL.

Year	Actual	Benchmark
2000-1	42%	34%
2001-2	45%	34%
2002-3	43%	37%
2003-4	42%	37%
2004-5	40%	37%
2005-6	49%	38%

Table 22: Proportion of UEL students from disadvantaged groups
Source: UEL University of East London Access Agreement

Tuition fees for 2008/9 are £3,145 – however there are a number of bursaries and scholarships available. These include:

- Minimum Standard Bursary of £300
- The UEL achievement Scholarship worth £1000 (there are 200 of these available) and here achievement is defined in its broadest sense and includes achievement in academic areas, citizenship, creative and sporting achievements.
- Refugee scholarships, which pay the difference between home and overseas fees to 50 refugees per year
- The UEL progress bursary, of £500 pounds for the first year, and £300 pounds in years two and three. These funds come from the monies received via top-up fees and the bursaries represent 26% of additional fee income received by the university.
- Part-time bursary to support part time undergraduate students. Rather than a payment, this bursary is a reduction in fees of £500

The Schools and Communities team at UEL run a wide variety of outreach work in the sub-region, including in Barking and Dagenham schools. All schools in the borough have taken advantage of UEL summer schools, taster days, university visits, and UEL's Student Ambassador scheme is particularly highly regarded. The Student Ambassadors are UEL students who are hired by the university to deliver much of this outreach work.

UEL also have established The Compact, a progression agreement for students at schools and colleges in East London. The Compact is designed to help students choose their courses at university. All learners studying at level three at partner institutions can join the scheme. The colleges taking part are:

- Barking College
- Epping Forest College
- Havering 6th Form College
- Lewisham College
- Newham College
- Redbridge College
- The Community College Hackney
- Tower Hamlets College
- Waltham Forest College

The benefits to learners are:

- A guaranteed place on an appropriate programme of study at UEL
- A guaranteed interview for AVA (Architecture & Visual arts) students
- Use of the UEL Learning Resource Centre and its facilities
- The opportunity to have a one to one appointment with a qualified IAG adviser
- Invitations to subject specific taster events (Highway programme)
- Invitations to study skills sessions
- Help with portfolios for AVA students
- The opportunity to be linked with a current UEL student mentor who can help with any queries students may have about University
- Web forum/chat with other Compact students
- The opportunity to apply for scholarships and bursaries (UEL 2008)

In terms of students from Barking and Dagenham, progressing to UEL, the research team was surprised to find, given its outreach work with schools in the borough, that these figures were so low. In 2008/9 there were 447 students from Barking and

Dagenham enrolled at the university. The breakdown of ethnicity, gender, age can be found in table 23.

Barking and Dagenham UEL Students	
Ethnicity	Total
Asian - Bangladeshi	12
Asian - Chinese	3
Asian - Indian	9
Asian - Other	6
Asian - Pakistani	21
Black - African	160
Black - Caribbean	25
Black - Other	16
Irish Traveller	1
Not given	36
Not given (Dom=Home)	12
Not given (Dom=Osea)	8
Other	14
Other Mixed	5
Other White Background	8
White	92
White - Irish	2
White and Asian	3
White/Black African	9
White/Black Caribbn	5
Grand Total	447

Table 23: Ethnicity of Barking and Dagenham Students at UEL
Source: UEL Student Records

Here, it is clear that BME groups make up the majority of UEL learners from Barking and Dagenham with 77% coming from BME groups. White groups (including White other and white Irish) constitute only 22.8% of Barking and Dagenham learners. In terms of gender, the UEL Barking and Dagenham cohort breakdown is as follows: 266 female learners, and 181 male learners. This means that 59% of Barking and Dagenham students are female, with only 40.5% males. One encouraging point to be made is that out of 183 applicants from Barking and Dagenham to UEL in the 2008/09 academic year, 160 were accepted, see table 24.

2008/09 Barking and Dagenham UEL Applicants	
Programme Code	Total
BA Honours by Distance Learning	1
Bachelor of Arts Honours	94
Bachelor of Arts Honours - Placement	6
Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Hons	6
Bachelor of Engineering Honours	2
Bachelor of Laws Honours	7
Bachelor of Music Honours	1
Bachelor of Science Honours	58
Foundation Degree in the Arts	8
Grand Total	183

Table 24: 2008/09 Barking and Dagenham UEL Applicants
Source: UEL Student Records

6.6 Vocational and other routes

The traditional academic route into HE, that is GCSEs followed by A-levels, was once the standard route of progression to University. In more recent years other progression routes have become established. These include vocational routes (based on vocational qualifications and the new Diplomas), the introduction of Foundation Degrees, and the scaling up of apprenticeships and work-based learning means that now there is more choice in terms of progression routes into Higher and Further Education. These initiatives are of particular importance to young learners who do not want to follow a traditional academic route, either because of choice, or pre-existing levels of achievement. As many young people in the borough fit that profile, these choices represent a step in the right direction, and many young learners in the borough are following these routes into HE.

At Barking College, out of 172 learners, only 44 came from the A-level route. The remainder, 75%, came from other routes, such as BTEC.²⁵ In the borough, A-level results have been static over the last few years, however in the last year there was an increase of 25% of learners progressing to university through other routes.²⁶ However these progression routes have taken time to be understood as viable, if not better, options for a wide range of young learners. There is some evidence that schools are not aware of the range of vocational degrees at university.²⁷ There is also evidence that schools are encouraging their young learners to go into A-levels, where, perhaps, other progression routes would be a more suitable option.

I can only say from people coming into the shop that pupils are encouraged to stay on in the 6th forms and do academic courses whereas they'd been perhaps more suited to other vocational courses. I saw a couple of people during clearing who'd had weak GCSEs, but been encouraged to take A levels, but were quite weak so had then failed and after 2 years they didn't have qualifications out of it. And that is quite common because children are encouraged to stay on at school. And it tends to be more academic than vocational.

Key Expert Interview

This is confirmed by some of the interviews with young people:

In year 11 we had a sort of seminar about what you plan to do after your GCSEs and what you can do, and that is where I pretty much found out about the consortium and all of that. But thinking about it now I would have preferred, instead of doing A-levels in the sixth form, I would have preferred to go to an actual college because for one thing they seem to have a lot of other courses that are more relevant to what I want to do. And I think it's good to be put in a different environment because you've seen the same buildings and the same walls every day like seven years, it can get a bit tedious.

Interview with male learner.

²⁵ Key Informant Interview

²⁶ Key Informant Interview

²⁷ Key Informant Interview

Further enquiries about the perception of A-levels found the following:

I: What kinds of people choose to go into A-levels?

YP1: There's the type that generally want to try and further their education because they see it as a way of giving more prospects to their future. And then there's the group that is sort of like sort of interested in education but think they only start to do their A-levels because their friends are doing A-levels so it's like the peer pressure thing and they'll drop out after the first year or something. Then the other group aren't really sure what they want to do so they will go into their A-levels and depending on how they feel after they've started that they will continue or they will like drop out and try and get a job.

Interview with young learner

It seems that one area where gains could be made in encouraging the young people of Barking and Dagenham to progress to HE would be to improve the profile and understanding of different routes into HE that do not require A-levels.

One good thing at the moment is the apprentice scheme. A lot of young people are taking advantage of this scheme - targets early school leavers at 15 with no GCSEs or A levels – car mechanics, plumbers, factories.

Interview with Key Expert

6.7 Other Local Initiatives

6.7.1 Aimhigher

Aimhigher is a national programme which has been established to widen participation in HE via targeted initiatives designed to encourage young people to realise the benefits of participating in HE. Aimhigher has two cohorts: one related to widening participation for all; and one directed to gifted and talented learners who are at risk of under achieving. In Barking & Dagenham there are two Aimhigher streams: the regional network London East Thames Gateway Aimhigher; and Barking & Dagenham Aimhigher. Aimhigher began in Barking & Dagenham in 2001 (Aimhigher was formerly known as the Excellence Challenge), and today the delivery partnership includes the nine secondary schools in the borough, Barking College and Barking & Dagenham Training Services.

Since the establishment of activity in the area, there have been year on year increases in the numbers of school leavers both applying for places, and entering into HE from the borough. These numbers indicate that the Aimhigher initiatives (together with other initiatives to be discussed) are having a positive impact on young learners in the borough. Indeed the number of learners who have made successful applications to university in the borough has risen by 25% from 2007 to 2008. Overall, since the inception of the Aimhigher programme of events in 2001, numbers of applications to university have doubled and those taking places at Higher Education Institutions has risen by 86%, evidenced in table 25.

Nationally set Targets	Baseline 2000-1	Year 1 2001-2	Year 2 2002-3	Year 3 2003-4	Year 4 2004-5	Year 5 2005-6	Year 6 2006-7	Year 7 2007-8
Number of students who apply to HE at age 18-19	351	405	418	473	464	570	607	717
Number of students who progress to HE at age 18-19	261	321	320	412	430	453	486	609
Proportion of students achieving top UCAS points (300+) from at least 2 A levels (80+)	N/a	72 21.5%	73 26%	92 22%	101 26%	122 20.5% **	147 25.3% **	205 29.8%**
Number of students starting a post-16 education (a level 3 course) Schools only	788 (46% of Y11 cohort)	762 (44% of Y11 cohort)	799 (47% of Y11 cohort)	859 (48% of Y11 cohort)	937 (48% of Y11 cohort)	953 (49% of Y11 cohort)	993 (50% of Y11 cohort)	1137 (54% of Y11 cohort)

** These figures now include Barking College results

Table 25: Barking and Dagenham young learners progressing into HE, and attainment levels
Source: Aimhigher Barking and Dagenham Report 2008

The activities that are funded through Aimhigher include university visits, Oxbridge interview preparation, study skills sessions, Saturday schools, Health and Social Care Careers taster events, and Law career taster events. In addition to these, the programme for 2008 included a successful London 2012 careers morning. The 2008/2009 programme will continue to offer a wide range of initiatives, despite a reduced budget. This will include Engineering and Teaching taster days and more information about the range of careers that the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games will offer.

6.7.2 The London Student Pledge

The London Student Pledge formed part of the London Challenge Strategy (2003-2008) which sought to widen young learner's experiences with a range of enrichment activities both in and out of school, designed to raise aspirations. There were ten challenges that the pledge involved:

1. I will have had the chance to express my views on London issues and be listened to.
2. My academic, sporting or creative talents will have been celebrated - at school or outside.
3. I will have taken part in a public event - either sports, dance or concert or visual arts.
4. I will have taken part in a play, musical or reading that involves either acting, speaking or helping with the production.
5. I will have been on an educational visit or overnight stay.
6. I will have had the opportunity to help others through voluntary activities.
7. I will have been to an artistic or sporting event at a major London venue.
8. I will have learnt to understand other cultures and faiths.
9. I will have planned, delivered and evaluated a project from beginning to end.
10. I will have experienced cutting-edge science and technology.²⁸

²⁸ from the London Student Pledge,
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/london/teachersandleaders/teachingandlearning/pledge/londonstudentpledge/>

Barking and Dagenham have responded to the London Student Pledge with a number of initiatives, many of which (such as the youth forum) have been long established in the Borough. Activities include:

- Barking and Dagenham's Youth Forum holds regular meetings to inform Council Members and the local community of its views.
- During Excellence in Cities week, local student champions from each school are recognised. Other annual events celebrate achievements of high performing students at GCSE and A level and each school also nominates a pupil who has achieved particularly well.
- The borough has two galleries where schools can display their work — these are at the Central Library and the Westbury Centre.
- The Community Music Service provides inclusive activities: instrumental tuition; workshops; singing and orchestral challenges; including massed choir and orchestra performances with adults and school pupils of all levels performing together. One such event was a gospel concert.
- There are borough-wide and inter-school sports events across boroughs.
- Dagenham Priory have successfully encouraged boys' dance.
- All schools have a variety of drama performances each year.
- Dagenham Priory holds Arts College status and has developed its community base and inter-school activities. It is affiliated to the Royal College. They have an inclusive approach and hold regular evening workshops with BanDIT Shed and often perform in local theatres.
- A gifted and talented group from one secondary school studied drama during a summer school and performed at Sadler's Wells.
- A residential Centre at Trewrn in Wales provides sports activities of all kinds.
- Activities through the Gifted and Talented Programme and Aim Higher offer many young people opportunities to visit other countries. Young people have visited Padua for art and Provence in connection with Latin On-Line. Young people also have opportunities to visit universities for summer schools and residentials to enable them to get a taste of university life.
- Robert Clack School has been selected to pilot a new national GCSE course, Science in the 21st Century, and will introduce a new Sixth Form Course, Science for Public Understanding, in September 2004.
- Another school enters the BBC schools robotics event, having designed their robots through Gifted and Talented design and technology. They have appeared on television.²⁹

6.7.3 Barking Learning Centre

Barking Learning Centre is a newly built facility which is part of plans for the regeneration of Barking town centre. It is a multi-use facility which provides a wide range of courses from entry to degree level together with a new central library, a one stop shop for municipal enquiries, café, gallery and conference facilities. The learning providers include Barking College, the University of East London and the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham. These providers work in partnership with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and have been successful in running a range of courses and advice for learners of all ages and levels.

²⁹ Verbatim from Barking and Dagenham London Student Pledge Case Study at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/london/teachersandleaders/teachingandlearning/pledge/londonstudentpledge/casestudies/barkinganddagenham/>

The new enlarged library offers special services for teenagers and children as well as resources for learners, a lending and reference library and IT facilities. There are over 50,000 titles in stock and a range of electronic publications. There are also 50+ computer terminals which can be accessed for free.

The One Stop Shop provides a range of services for local residents including:

- Housing and council tax benefit enquiries
- Council tax enquiries
- Housing advice
- Education advice and school applications
- Free school meals and uniform grants
- Student loans
- Recycling and rubbish collection
- Estate management for council tenants
- Freedom passes
- Parking permits
- Bill payment
- General advice

Barking College and the University of East London not only provide courses here, but have offices where Information, Advice and Guidance on courses at their respective institutions is offered.

6.7.4 Building Schools for the Future

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the Government programme to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England. The whole programme will see £45 billion spent in this area, and Barking and Dagenham is in Wave 4 of the initiative, with many physical school builds to be started across the borough. Alongside this a centralised IT system with one provider is to be established. This initiative is in line with the Every Child Matters agenda, and will see every BSF school as an extended school which will offer ancillary services such as additional or dual use facilities like sports halls and grounds, libraries, clubs, nurseries and ICT facilities. This is intended to put schools at the heart of the community and open them up for increased community use. In Barking and Dagenham all secondary schools, as well as Trinity Special School, are involved in this initiative.

Barking and Dagenham's LAA outlines the strength of the BSF programme and highlights ways in which this fits in with the borough's plans to raise the achievement of young learners.

–A key priority of BSF is to ensure that post-16 provision is configured to improve the offer and success rate at A level across the borough as a whole; and we also wish to improve partnerships between schools and the FE sector to more widely ensure a holistic approach to post-16 opportunities and appropriate outcomes for young people.” (LBB, 2009:7)

The key guiding principles and priorities for Building Schools for the Future are to:

1. Extend choice, diversity and fair access by:

- Expanding successful schools
- Increasing faith school options
- Transforming vocational, technical and practical opportunities in every school
- Developing all-through co-ordinated campus provision on at least 3 sites

2. Personalise learning and teaching

- Building to enable structured and responsive approaches to each young person's learning, enabling all to reach their full potential academically and in their adult and working life, and to develop their personal and particular interests, gifts and talents

3. Harness technology to:

- Improve attainment and build on the evidence of the impact of the borough's central involvement in the recent ICT Test Bed improvement programme
- Support personalisation of learning
- Combine contributions of parents and the voluntary and community sector to learning

4. Promote excellent social interaction for learning and personal development by designing for:

- High quality speaking, listening, discussion debate and dialogue in paired, small-group, seminar and whole-class situations
- Productive environments for personal, social and health guidance, mentoring and support
- Ensuring that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example those on the autistic spectrum, have supportive, non-threatening spaces in which to thrive
- Enabling children and young people to develop the whole range of 'soft skills'

5. Strengthen the support to families in favour of the welfare, well-being and upbringing of all children and young people

6. Maximise the contribution of Building Schools for the Future investment to the social economic and cultural development of the whole community

7. Promote and enable new ways of working, for example:

- Pedagogical transformation across the whole range of learning opportunities, with ICT at the heart
- Developing shared social pedagogical principles across all practitioners working in and from the new and refurbished schools.³⁰

Current weaknesses in provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also addressed in the Building Schools for the Future proposals.

³⁰ Verbatim from Barking and Dagenham's response to Building Schools for the future <http://www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk/1-schools/building-future/principles.html>

6.8 Young people's views on school

Many young people report that they did not like school. The "Do you like school" question was asked in nearly all interviews and focus groups, intended as an ice breaker. While we would expect many young people, particularly teenagers to be critical of their school experience, the level of detail that this question provoked was unexpected.

From the focus groups and interviews the main reasons cited for not liking school ranged from complaints about teachers not controlling the classes, so school was seen as useless, to complaints about "petty" school rules (in particular uniform rules). Many young people report stories of sub-standard teaching at a variety of schools in the borough, and particularly complained about supply teachers.

It was okay. Nothing to shout about. I didn't particularly think my school was very good - you can only do the best with what you've got.

Some of the teachers were very good and they really wanted to improve what you are already had. And some were better than others.

It was a very loud and chaotic school and some of the lessons were disrupted to constantly and you just couldn't learn in some of the classes, to be honest.

Interview with young male learner

And more specifically:

YP1: Teachers don't control the classes – the kids control the class

YP2: Even if you try to do work – it's hard – you just get sidetracked...

Interview with young learners

Disruptive class environments are not welcomed by either teacher or learner, and through the research we found that this was a common issue across the borough, although this was found to be more pronounced in some schools than others. Other complaints regarding school was a perceived lack of respect, as young people feel they are not listened to. Also, punishments are thought to be too lax by some students. Isolation is seen as a 'free day', and some report using uniform rules to get out of school.

One explanation as to why many young learners in the borough experience difficulties with their school environment is to do with notions of adulthood, and respect.

Most young people we get, we find they've kind of outgrown the school system. They're already too mature because of their street-wisdom – if that's a word. They're not used to being treated like a child. And they're not used to having an orderly path and they're not used to being told what to do. They're not used to that environment. They're used to having a free rein at home. And they're much needier, because they can't function out of those sorts of circumstances and that environment.

Key expert interview

Of course, not all young people responded that they didn't like school, and many had very good things to say about their school experience. The main reason young people say they like school is because of the social aspects, rather than the educational aspects.

I loved school. I didn't actually want to leave. And college is a lot different from school, but I definitely miss it... I knew everyone, and everyone knew each other. Everyone gets on. That's why I liked it.

Interview with young learner

As this seemed such an important issue, we asked this question in the Barking College survey. This enabled us to cross tabulate results from this question with other questions, and establish links between not liking school, and the aspiration to go into HE. Some of these findings are of particular interest.

When cross-tabulations are examined – considerably more males than females did *NOT* like school, however there are no significant frequencies between liking school and ethnicity or age.

In table 26, we have linked liking school and the desire to go to University. There is, not surprisingly, correspondence with enjoyment of school and the desire to go to University. What is of interest here are the few who did not like school, but who want to go to University anyway.

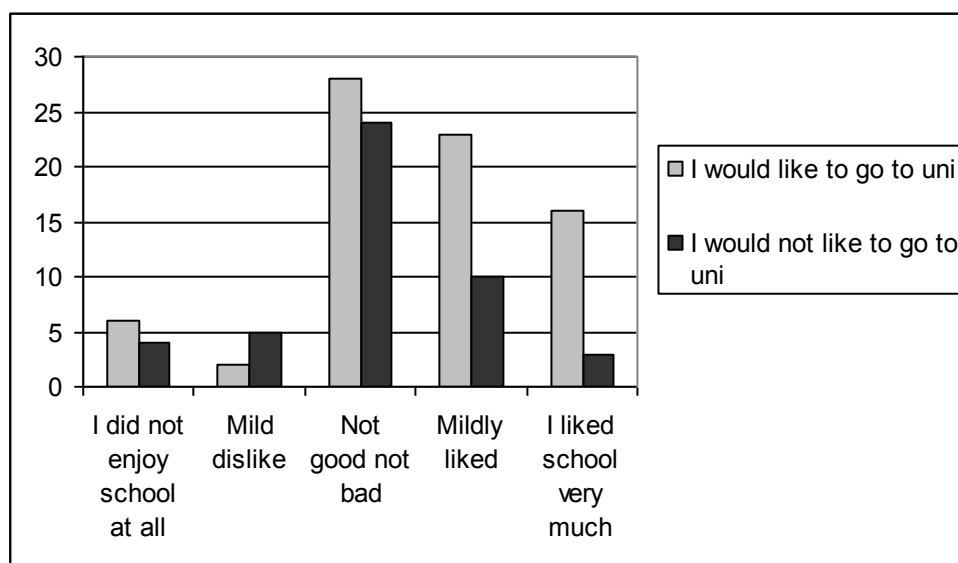


Table 26: Cross tabulation of numbers of learners liking school and desire to go to University
Source: Barking College Survey

6.9 Student – Teacher Relationships

This was an area that caused a lot of concern for many of the young people interviewed. When asked what they did not like about school, the majority of young people we talked to cited bad teachers, supply teachers, and teachers that talked down to them. There were also positive comments about the good teachers that they had encountered through their schooling.

Young people understand the politics of this relationship well. Some pointed to the fact that if you have a poor relationship with a teacher in a certain subject that this can significantly effect an individual's achievement in that subject.

YP: There are some teachers that you do not get on with. Especially at GCSE level if you don't get on with the teacher it can be quite hard to progress in that subject.

I: Can you tell me more about that?

YP: If you don't particularly get along with the teacher, or agree with the teacher in some subjects then if you need help it can be hard to go to the teacher and get help - sometimes you will not agree with what they are saying.

Interview with young learner

Also data from interviews show that young people feel that many teachers label them, which then reduced their chances of success in particular classes. For example one young learner talked of the differences in approaches between teachers at schools, and at college:

YP: In college they treat you like you're a grown-up. They give you more freedom kind of thing. In school, you can get a certain reputation in school and a reputation is hard to get rid of. In college, it is more fair. (At school) some teachers had me labelled.

I: What do you think the consequence of being labelled is?

YP: I think certain individuals take in their own way and start being extra naughty with that teacher, and then they stop liking them, and that makes it worse.

Interview with young learner

Despite some negativity expressed by young people about their teachers, many good points were also raised. Once learners had spoken about bad teachers, we asked a number of them what makes a good teacher.

I: What makes a good teacher?

YP1: When they listen to you. When they actually help you, and not just say they can help you. They make you think you're going to get help and then when it comes to what they don't help you.

YP2: You need to know that you've got the support that if you don't understand you've got someone you can go to help you and not just judge you for the way you are, or how slow you work or how fast you work.

From interviews with young learners

6.10 Recommendations

- Stronger links between schools and colleges should be formalised, and all schools in the borough should be encouraged to join UEL's Compact agreement.
- Programmes which encourage schools to consider apprenticeships, diplomas and other vocational routes as serious alternatives to A-levels should be developed. This could be further embedded into taster days run both by the colleges and UEL.
- To remedy the feeling that young people are not respected, innovative approaches to respecting the learner voice would be appropriate here, encouraging the schools to listen even more to their learners in a structured way.
- Schools and FE colleges increasingly to collaborate in relation to pathways to provision.
- More opportunities for schools to share their good practice, through, for example, the 6th form consortia structure.
- Programmes that address issues of literacy and numeracy at GCSE level must be a priority for the borough. Schools are aware of the problem, and while some measures are being introduced the provision of extra activities borough wide could make a significant contribution here.
- More research would be desirable into the reasons behind pupil absenteeism in the borough. During this research a number of different reasons (some legitimate, some not) were given for chronic absenteeism, but it was not possible to explore this further.
- Appropriate programmes aimed at male learners from the lowest socio-economic bands need to be developed to promote HE participation. Given the character of achievement in this cohort, these should emphasise more vocational routes into HE, and as such, the FE Colleges should lead on this.
- Although the male populations show less inclination and poorer achievement than female counterparts, programmes for white indigenous females should also be run in the borough. From the interviews it is clear that there are multiple issues affecting young women's educational progression in the borough – teenage pregnancy, and many unpaid carers tend to be female.
- This research suggests that interventions to raise aspirations of young learners have had some effectiveness, however progressive and integrated interventions to raise the aspirations of young learners' families are needed, so that they get the encouragement and support they need to go into HE successfully.

7 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

In terms of widening participation, IAG provision is a key area. Barking and Dagenham, on the whole, provides good IAG and specific careers advice for young people, and more mature learners, from a number of centres in the borough. There is a Connexions service located near the train station. Connexions also run an onsite centre at Barking College. Connexions staff support the careers advice work that takes place in secondary schools.

B&D Training and Work Advice Centre is located in the Vicarage Field Shopping Centre, was established some 10 years ago and was a partnership between UEL, Connexions, Barking College, Jobnet and Surestart. The educational advice component of this service has recently moved to the Barking Learning Centre, although some outreach provision remains back in the shopping centre base one day a week and on alternate Saturdays.

Eaststreet, a drop in centre which is centrally located in the retail section of the town centre sees 4,500 young people a year – much of this work includes IAG, and mainly these sessions are with 16-19 year olds.

The new Barking Learning Centre houses IAG provision which is an outreach programme that is run by UEL. Although this is run by the university, due to the funding mechanism, advice about courses is not restricted to UEL's offer, but refers potential learners to a wide variety of courses at a wide range of levels on offer in the borough and neighbouring boroughs.

IAG provision by UEL at the Barking Learning Centre sees an average of 912 enquiries per month.³¹ These figures are from January 2006 to March 2009, with some exceptions, namely missing data from August to December 2007. These data also cover the time period when this advice was delivered from the Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, and while there was a predicted decline in the numbers who sought advice due to the move to the Barking Learning Centre, (in November 2008), the real decline did not start until February 2009, where only 204 enquirers were seen. The data collected about these enquiries is particularly useful to this study as demographic, geographic and study level data is also collected. From this we can examine the type of enquirers that seek advice from the service.

More women have accessed this service than men, the data shows that 59% of enquiries come from women, as opposed to 41% from men. The majority of enquiries come from 25-49 year olds, at 55% of all enquiries, while 20-24 year olds constitute 44%. A further 1% are aged over 50. In terms of level of study to which these potential learners are referred, the most referrals are sent to New Beginnings courses – this is 36%, while 34% are referred to UEL. 19% are referred to FE and the remaining 11% to Access courses. 29% of enquiries come from the E postcodes, 20% from RM postcodes, 37.5% from IG and 13% from other postcodes.

The service is accessed by more BME groups than white groups (including groups who self identify as White Other). The breakdown is as follows: 38% Afro-Caribbean groups, 23% from Asian groups, 9% who identify as mixed race, and 18% White groups. This certainly confirms earlier findings about the importance of education to BME groups. Although this advice centre is primarily for older learners (20+), its successes could well be replicated with younger learners.

³¹ These figures are from January 2006 to March 2009, from UEL.

However, for the young cohort, the main focus for IAG is, necessarily, via the school system. While IAG provision overall in the borough is good, there are a number of cracks that young people can fall through.

In terms of careers guidance provided by the schools in the borough, initial findings show that there is a good level of provision here in most schools. Only one school does not have dedicated, full time careers advice as part of its offer, and relies solely on Connexions visits. All other schools have a variety of careers advice activities in addition to the Connexions provision. The provision of careers advice is key to ensuring that young learners are aware of all HE opportunities. While most schools in the borough are responding well to this challenge with many activities, advice sessions, university visits, speakers, games etc we found that many young learners did not take advantage of these services.

The overall effectiveness of careers advice in the borough, particularly through schools, can be seen through the Barking College student survey. While the majority did get careers advice at school (approximately 75%), this still leaves a significant minority who did not receive any advice.

Although the majority received advice through their school, the usefulness of this advice was felt to be lacking by many young people. 29.6% of those who did receive advice, felt that this was not at all, or not very useful. However, some 61.6% did find the advice useful, but the majority of these found the advice only –somewhat useful.” Those who found the advice very useful were in the minority, (14.4%).

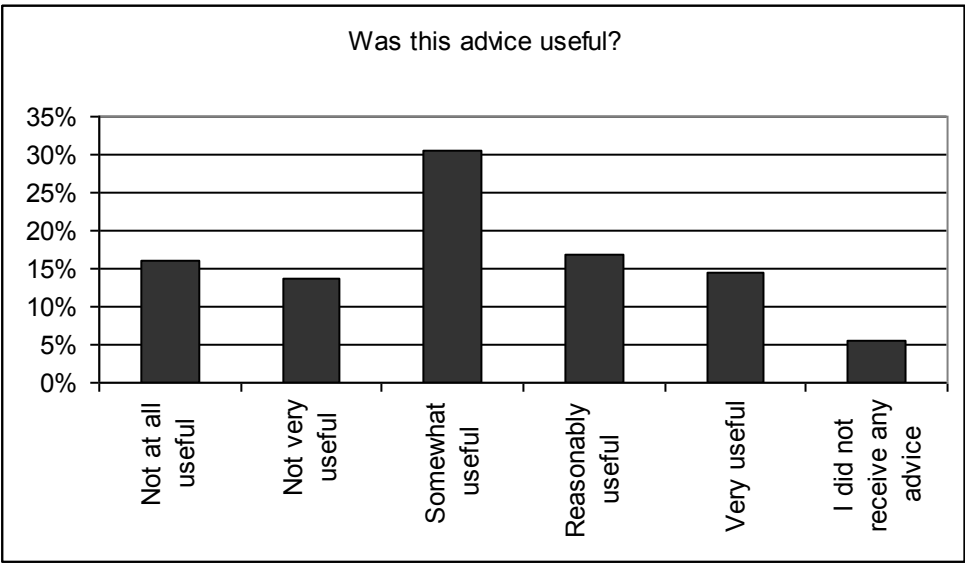


Table 27: Was the careers advice you received useful?
Source: Barking College Survey

This mixed response to the advice given was confirmed through the focus groups and one on one interviews. For example, the following from a focus group shows the differences in advice given, and how this advice was received.

YP1: Well I did have the meeting with a lady from Connexions it kind of made my decisions a lot clearer and she helped me with my options.

I: Did you approach them, or did you get selected through the school?

YP1: No, we got selected through the school. But you can choose whether you want to go or not.

I: Do you have a similar story, or a different story?

YP2: My story is different, I always seem to have the negative experiences. I was in year nine and everyone in year nine had had a meeting with Connexions, so I went for my meeting and the man said what do you want to be, and I said I want to be a forensic scientist, and he kind of like laughed at me and said is that because you watch CSI?

Focus Group Conversation

And another participant in the same group had this story to tell:

YP3: She (careers adviser) put you down and stuff. I said I wanna be a lawyer, and she just asked me stupid questions like I didn't know what I wanted to do and I was just being forced into it or something. She kept putting me down so I just stopped going to her.

I: Did you have any careers advice at school?

YP4: Yes, once the other week that's about it. It was alright but he just told me what I already knew. It was just like what you want to be when you're older, what Uni's are you looking at - I already knew them anyway.

I: What about you? Have you had any careers advice?

YP5: No not really, Connexions kind of helped me with my CV at school, but that's about it - nothing really.

Focus Group Conversation

Just from a single focus group we can see the differences in careers advice for young learners. This was a recurring theme through the research with vast differences in the quantity and quality of advice. However, some young people's expectations were found to be unrealistic when dealing with advice centres such as Connexions. As one person reported being upset that Connexions helped her with her C.V. – but expressed surprise that she then had to find work for herself:

YP5: Then I went to the one in Barking to get a job and they weren't helpful and they were just asking information about myself and then they told me they'd contact me - and they didn't contact me so I went back and they helped me with my CV and that but they didn't help me get a job so I had to go out and look for one myself.

From the interviews, it is clear that for many learners at the GCSE stage of their schooling simply have no idea of what kind of career they want to pursue. This despite having to choose subjects with some relevance to their proposed career. For this cohort, careers advice, and advice around choosing subjects can be viewed as either a waste of time, or a fearful experience that has associated stress attached to it. This obviously causes problems for both adviser and learner.

This was confirmed with other interviews:

Year 13 you start talking about uni but you have no real idea what its about – you haven't attended summer schools etc, but you have to make a decision.

Interview with former B&D learner

7.1 Work Placements

All young learners in the borough undertake work placements in Year 10 or 11 as a compulsory part of their studies. All work placements in the borough are organised by the Barking and Dagenham Trident team that matches young learners with employers. Young people have three choices of the types of work they are interested in, and then are matched accordingly. However, through the research we found that this was not always effective. Most of the young people we spoke to did not get matched with appropriate positions. A youth worker also confirmed this – and brought up significant gender issues with these placements.

YW: "...we've done a campaign on this. And what are they called - the five C's? Trident will send girls into cashiering, childcare, catering - all those different things, whereas the boys will get sent different places.

I: Is there a gender issue with work placements in the borough?

YW: Sometimes. Boys get given jobs that are more plumbing and electricians, girls will get given the other jobs."

Interview with youth worker

Indeed this was confirmed via our focus group work. This gender bias, coupled with generally inappropriate placements that were not the students' choice, has resulted in many learners missing out on the positive opportunities offered by work experience.

Once these gender biases were revealed by the youth worker, this was tested with a focus group of young women in the borough.

I: Do these gender differences with work placements bother you?

YP1: Yes, I think it's a bit out of order. Girls who want to go in and do other things like being an electrician, then they should be allowed. It shouldn't just be a male thing it should be for everyone. It doesn't matter who applies, whoever applies first should get it. It works the other way around as well, there are boys who are not getting their first choice as well. For example, I think there should be more men in childcare, I think it's healthy.

Interview with female learner

The organisation of work placements is not an easy task – particularly in uncertain economic times when many companies are not willing to be involved. However, two weeks away from school in an unsuitable or uninspiring role is contrary to the valuable real life experience that these placements are supposed to bring. The following conversation about the suitability of these placements reveals an issue for the borough.

I: Where were you sent?

YP1: I was sent to a primary school and I never put primary school on any of my lists. I wanted to do stuff in London so I put office jobs, retail and a few scientific jobs were at the top, but I was sent to a primary school.

I: What about you?

YP2: I went and found a job for myself. I worked in a volunteer's office at reception and helped with seeing people and stuff like that.

I: What about you, did you do work experience at school?

YP3: I did pick to work in offices and stuff, but then they sent me to a retail centre. I didn't want to do this, it wasn't on my list.

I: What about you?

YP4: I worked in a hairdressers in my first week and a primary school.

I: Were they your choices?

YP4: No. I put down office. The hairdressers I had to complain about because they were unhygienic.

I: What about you?

YP5: Actually, I worked at a school.

I: Was that your choice?

YP5: Yes, because I wanted to go into childcare.

I: So out of five of you only one got their choice?

YP5: Yes.

Conversation from focus group with young female learners in the borough

Logistically it is understandable that many will not get their first choice of placement. However this research has revealed that most placements appear to be unsuitable. While this cannot be remedied overnight, a concerted effort to find employers willing to take on work placements should be established in the borough. Of course young learners have the opportunity to find placements themselves through family and other contacts – but this would privilege those with existing professional connections, (i.e.

middle class families) whereas those who do not have these connections may miss out.

Another problem that was revealed through the research is the follow up responsibilities of schools who are obliged to check the suitability of employers, and to see how the young people are responding to the challenge of work placement experiences. The interviews and focus groups found that in many cases this was simply not done.

YP1: Everywhere that everyone in my college goes is supposed to be checked, but they're not.

YP2: All I did at the hairdressers was make tea.

Conversation from focus group

There is an additional problem with work experience placements in the borough, one which reflects the need to develop the local economy and attract companies and industries with suitable jobs for graduates. Skills development and economic development in the region has been highlighted as a core concern to be addressed by regeneration and development policies from the Thames Gateway, for example. Until these targets are met, work placements in the borough (rather than, say, in central London) will continue to offer limited experiences for young learners.

There may be another way to ensure that the value of work experience activities remains high. There are a number of third sector organisations operating in the borough and in adjoining boroughs. These too could offer young learners work experience opportunities. Volunteering by young Barking and Dagenham residents is already an established practice, and the volunteering possibilities opened by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games could add to this offer. Research coming from the JSNA found that “volunteering was reasonably high across the borough with 6 out of 10 respondents giving up their time to help a charity, a local voluntary group, a neighbour or someone else in the last year.” (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009)

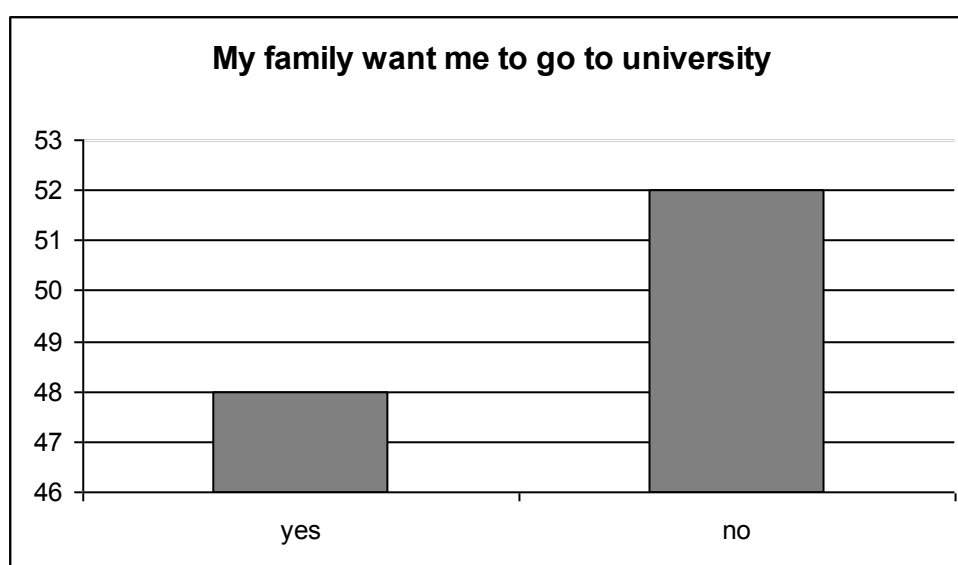
7.2 Recommendations:

- The University of East London, Barking College and other educational institutions in the borough could themselves open their doors to work placements. In particular, UEL with its broad subject areas, and ancillary non-academic departments, could provide work placements for young people who wish to be involved in: research, administration, teaching, facilities management, project management, catering, printing, IT, along with subject based areas.
- Anonymisation of young learners' records when being matched to work would prevent gender bias when assigning placements. While ethnic or disability biases were not tested through the research, anonymisation would also prevent these biases also.
- Although all careers advisers spoke well of UELs activities, and in particular of the student ambassadors, when visiting many careers libraries at schools, the research team did notice a lack of UEL prospectuses on shelves. This could be easily remedied by a mail out of new materials.

8 Barking and Dagenham learner profiles

8.1 Aspiration

Through the research it was found that many young people do want to go into HE. The New Opportunities White Paper pointed to the fact that now over 50% of young learners from all social classes say that they aspire to go to university. In Barking and Dagenham, this figure is actually higher, some 60%. Certainly, the figures from the Barking College survey reflect this (see table 28), and this statistic is matched by a borough wide survey of young people in 2008 where it was found that 60% wanted to go on to University, which is above the national average of 54%. (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009)



**Table 28: My family want me to go to University,
Source: Barking College Survey**

The questionnaires were completed by Barking College students who have chosen to be in full time education,³² so presumably there is a pre-existing willingness to engage with education. These results are interesting as there is clear indication here that the majority would like to complete and to further their studies.³³

When asked if their families would like them to go on to university, the complexity of the problem begins to emerge. Slightly more young respondents reported that their family would not like them to go on to HE than would. It is clear then, that the young people's aspirations are, in general, to continue with their studies and eventually to enjoy university, or HE delivered through an FE institution. This suggests that it is familial pressures that might be preventing some young people from entering HE.

³² For some of these students this has not been a choice, they were excluded from school and are finishing either GCSEs or A-levels.

³³ Indeed there is a clear progression from BC (and Havering college) to university, in particular UEL – as when we examined our figures of learners from B&D – a significant minority were mature learners who came to UEL via BC – between 10 and 15%.

Table 29 shows the relationship of young learners and their own choices in terms of university, versus their families.

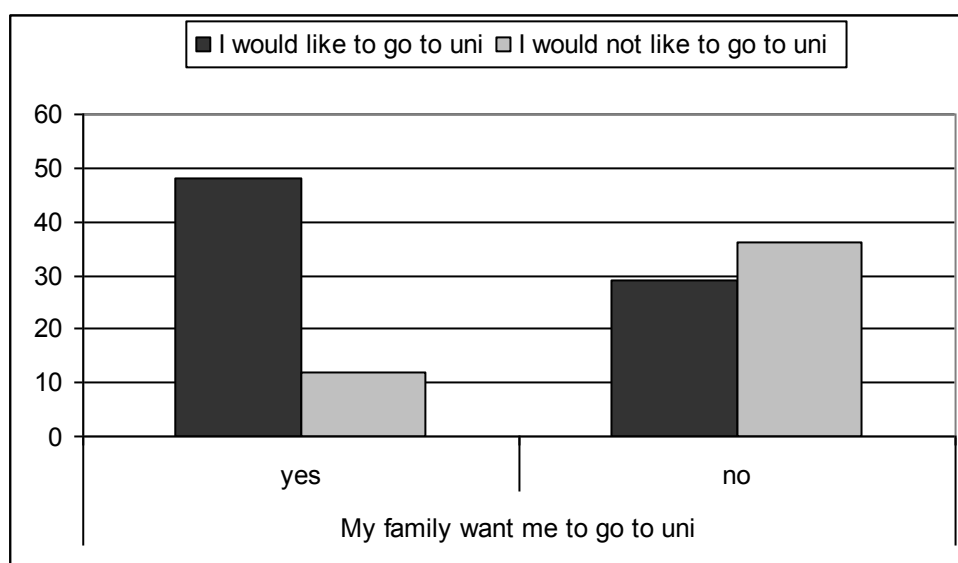


Table 29: Cross tabulation of I would like to go to university with my family want me to go to university
Source: Barking College Survey

When we cross-tabulated the results of Barking College students wanting to go to university with whether their families wanted them to go to university, we found that although 61.6% (60 learners) of these young people want to enter HE, 23.2% (29 learners) of these will do so with limited family support.

Its not just about poverty, but poverty of mind – many young people’s parents in the borough did not have a good experience of education.

Key expert interview

Interventions to raise aspirations of young learners appear to have been effective, however what is now needed are interventions to raise the aspirations of young learners’ families, so that they get the encouragement and support they need to go into HE successfully. This last point is vital, as a significant minority of 45% HE students in the borough live with their parents during term time, studying HE at an FE college, or studying at an HEI in London.

Considering gender differences and the desire to go to university, more female learners wish to go on to HE, than their male counterparts. This is certainly in line with national trends, and indeed, in the borough. From the most recent UCAS and POLAR data we can see that this is the case, with 54% of entrants being female, and only 46% of entrants across the borough being male. However, these percentages are not evenly spread through the borough, with 58% of young men in Goresbrook entering HE, but only 35% in Parsloes doing this as can be seen in table 30.

1991 Census ward name	Studying at HND/HNC level (%)	HEI within 30 minutes of home (revised) (%)	Lives with parents during term time (%)	Studying at UK HEI outside England (%)	Male entrant (%)
Abbey	11	26	53	1	47
Alibon	7	20	58	0	44
Cambell	5	25	44	5	44
Chadwell Heath	8	12	36	2	40
Eastbrook	9	14	33	4	49
Eastbury	16	16	41	0	40
Fanshawe	9	28	53	6	47
Gascoigne	13	34	42	5	45
Goresbrook	8	22	49	8	58
Heath	7	11	51	0	50
Longbridge	9	18	43	2	54
Manor	11	7	24	0	47
Marks Gate
Parsloes	10	23	49	0	35
River	6	16	41	0	51
Thames	8	16	38	8	47
Triptons	6	21	44	0	44
Valence	7	27	61	6	47
Village	4	19	51	0	41
Goodmayes	8	16	47	2	49

Table 30: Ward Breakdown of Barking and Dagenham HE learners, with percentages of male entrants

Source: HESA figures 2008/9

8.2 Educational attainment

There is then the aspiration to go into HE in the borough. However, this aspiration does not translate into HE entrants due to a variety of factors, but primarily due to prior achievement.

“Its no good having the aspiration to go on to HE if you don’t have the qualifications. The number one issue for low participation rates here is prior educational attainment.

Barking & Dagenham’s low achievement rates of level 2 and 3 at 19 years old is because:

- 1. We don’t retain enough post 16*
- 2. Where we do retain – prior achievement is not good enough*
- 3. Points scores at A level. While the point score per subject entry is close to the national average – (10 UCAS points away) the gap comes when you look at the average points” score per student, basically not enough students do 3.5 A-levels.*

Interview with Head Teacher in the borough

Indeed the educational attainment of all people in the borough is poor, as seen in table 31. If the adult community does not have the experience of Higher Education, then this can be seen to create a generational effect where education is devalued – as evidenced by the fact that more young people than their families want them to proceed to HE.

Ward	Pop. (est)	% Pop	% No quals	% Degree+
B&D	164,572	-----	39.5	-----
Abbey	10206	6.2	29.9	20.9
Alibon	9300	5.7	45.1	5.4
Becontree	11450	7.0	36.7	12.2
Chadwell Heath	9299	5.7	-----	10.4
Eastbrook	10096	6.2	37.3	9.4
Eastbury	10089	6.02	42.4	10.4
Gascoigne	9371	5.7	38.6	14.7
Goresbrook	10333	6.3	43.5	7.7
Heath	9649	5.9	45	7.2
Longbridge	8890	5.4	30.6	14.9
Mayesbrook	9316	5.7	46.1	5.5
Parsloes	9039	5.5	45.4	6.4
River	10260	6.3	41	7.4
Thames	8547	5.2	37.4	12.7
Valence	8775	5.4	45.5	6.6
Village	9720	5.9	39.6	8.8
Whalebone	9604	5.9	32.6	11.5

Table 31: Ward break down of skills and qualifications in the general population
Source: National Statistics

When educational attainment of young learners in the borough is examined, it is clear that this indeed, is part of the problem. While table 32 shows improvement in levels of attainment, the low starting point means that the borough still falls behind national averages.

Nationally set Targets	Baseline 2000-1	Year 1 2001-2	Year 2 2002-3	Year 3 2003-4	Year 4 2004-5	Year 5 2005-6	Year 6 2006-7	Year 7 2007-8
Improvement In A level or equivalent average point score per students	13.1%	65.9%	64.0%	67.1%	68.4%	570.1*	601.6	619.2
Improvement in GCSE results (5 +A*-C)	38.2%	42.4%	49.3%	46.3%	50.1%	56%	58.7%	58.4%
Proportion of students achieving top UCAS points (300+) from at least 2 A levels (80+)	N/a	72 21.5%	73 26%	92 22%	101 26%	122 20.5% **	147 25.3% **	205 29.8%**
Number of students starting a post-16 education (a level 3 course) Schools only	788 (46% of Y11 cohort)	762 (44% of Y11 cohort)	799 (47% of Y11 cohort)	859 (48% of Y11 cohort)	937 (48% of Y11 cohort)	953 (49% of Y11 cohort)	993 (50% of Y11 cohort)	1137 (54% of Y11 cohort)

Table 32: Aimhigher targets from 2001 to 2008, including numbers entering HE and achievement
Source: Aimhigher Barking and Dagenham

*Between year 4 and 5 the method for counting was changed from percentages to actual numbers

** These figures include Barking College results

8.2.1 Key Stage 4 Results

When examining the Key Stage 4 results for the borough it is clear that two issues emerge. The first is a general overall underachievement, compared to the rest of London and the country in terms of GCSE results including English and Maths. Without these subjects, the borough, although still behind London and the country, fares reasonably well with an average of 58.8% achieving 5 or more A* - C passes. This is only 2% behind London. However, when Maths and English are counted, the percentage of pupils who achieve the same grades – 5 A* - C passes is only 39.7%, a full 8% behind London averages, as seen in table 33.

GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Contextual Value Added Measures for Young People by Gender in England (Referenced by Location of Educational Institution), 2006/2007			
	Barking and Dagenham	London	England
All Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - C	58.7	60.8	62
All Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - G	92.5	92.2	91.7
All Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - C Including English and Maths	39.7	47.9	46.7
All Pupils at the End of KS4 With Any Passes	98.2	98	98.9
All Pupils at the End of KS4 With No Passes	1.8	2	1.1
Average GCSE and Equivalent Point Score Per Pupil at the End of KS4	375.7	376.4	378.1
Boy Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - C	56.6	56.8	57.7
Boy Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - G	91.6	90.6	89.9
Boy Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A*-C Including English and Maths	37.5	43.6	42.4
Boy Pupils at the End of KS4 With Any Passes	98	97.7	98.6
Average GCSE and Equivalent Point Score Per Boy Pupil at the End of KS4	371.6	360.9	360
Girl Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - C	60.9	64.9	66.4
Girl Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A* - G	93.4	93.8	93.6
Girl Pupils at the End of KS4 Achieving 5+ A*-C Including English and Maths	42.2	52.1	51.2
Girl Pupils at the End of KS4 With Any Passes	98.5	98.3	99.2
Average GCSE and Equivalent Point Score Per Girl Pupil at the End of KS4	380.3	391.9	396.9

Table 33: GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Contextual Value Added Measures for Young People by Gender in England, 2006/2007
Source: National statistics.

The underachievement of boys is a second concern. This has been the focus of a number of recent studies that indicate that this problem is particularly pronounced among white indigenous male populations, such underachievement certainly translates into a lack of desire for further and higher education. However this discussion is more complicated that it appears in news headlines such as the following, which were in response to the report by Cassen and Kingdom for Joseph Rowntree entitled *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*.

White boys let down by education system'
Daily Telegraph, 22 June 2007

Deprived white boys low achievers'
Daily Express, 22 June 2007

White working-class boys are the worst performers in school
Independent, 22 June 2007

(Headlines from Runnymede Trust, 2009)

What is key to understand here is that most economically deprived groups under perform regardless of ethnic background. Indeed, as the Runnymede Trust report points out –the achievement gap between white students in poverty (in receipt of free school meals - FSM) and more affluent whites (non-FSM) is more than *three times* bigger than the gaps between different ethnic groups who are equally disadvantaged.” (Runnymede Trust, 2009)

It is true that more females from the borough enter HE than their male counterparts. This is backed up by the Barking College questionnaire where more female learners than male learners want to go on to HE. Here, 40% of female learners expressed the desire to go to University, while only 36% of male learners did. Looking at male learners, there are two issues, both aspiration and attainment of males falls behind the female learners in the borough.

The above discussion centres on the borough as a whole, however as seen in previous discussions this hides the pockets of the borough where deprivation is greater. The table below, based on POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) data shows clearly the discrepancies throughout the borough in terms of participation in HE. The POLAR data represents young peoples participation (age 18 or 19) and defines HE as full-time first degree, or Higher National Diploma/Certificate (HND or HNC) at any HEI or FE College.

1991 Census ward name	POLAR participation quintile indicator	Young participation POLAR ward bands	Combined entrant count	Social Class IIIM, IV, V (UCAS entrants) (%)
Abbey	3	24% to 32%	250	49
Alibon	1	<16%	40	50
Cambell	1	<16%	60	50
Chadwell Heath	2	16% to 24%	130	34
Eastbrook	2	16% to 24%	90	38
Eastbury	2	16% to 24%	60	47
Fanshawe	1	<16%	60	49
Gascoigne	1	<16%	60	
Goresbrook	1	<16%	40	60
Heath	1	<16%	90	48
Longbridge	3	24% to 32%	220	36
Manor	1	<16%	60	49
Marks Gate	1	<16%	10	
Parsloes	1	<16%	40	50
River	1	<16%	90	64
Thames	1	<16%	40	45
Triptons	1	<16%	50	73
Valence	1	<16%	40	53
Village	1	<16%	80	48
Goodmayes	2	16% to 24%	190	45

Table 34: Ward level POLAR data for young HE entrants in Barking and Dagenham
Source: National Statistics

From table 34 we can see the differences in ward level participation, which ranges from under 16% to 32% engagement. While this shows the level of ward differentiation, the data is based on the 1999 cohort, so unfortunately the age of this data does not reveal the true story of Barking and Dagenham which has seen such dramatic increases in participation over the last 10 years.

Recommendations

- Programmes aimed at young white indigenous male learners need to be developed to encourage HE participation. Given the character of achievement in this cohort, these should emphasise more vocational routes into HE. It would be appropriate for the FE Colleges should lead on this.
- Although the male population shows less inclination and poorer achievement than female counterparts, programmes for white indigenous females should also be run in the borough. From the interviews it is clear that there are many issues affecting young women in the borough – teenage pregnancy, and many unpaid carers tend to be female, so that this group also needs encouragement to achieve and enter HE.

8.2.2 Literacy and Numeracy

An examination of GCSE results including Maths and English shows that there are serious issues with literacy and numeracy among young learners in the borough. This was confirmed by key expert interviews.

I'm not sure B&D want to hear this but, I had students who were 16 & 17 at Barking College. They could just about write their name and I said to them, „How did you get through?“ and they said, „just sit quiet or make a lot of noise and they chuck us out.“ So nobody is picking up the fact that these kids can't read or write. I had a student who wanted to go onto a painting and decorating course and he said „Miss, I can't write, but it doesn't matter for that sort of thing“. And I said, „of course it does“ and he went „why?“ and I said „Suppose they ask you to go and choose a canary yellow paint - could you read canary yellow?“ He said „No“. So I said, „You're putting yourself at a disadvantage“. I said „the last thing you want to do is to be knocked back each time“. And eventually he took on going to learning Support and upped his reading and writing. I said to him, „It doesn't matter where you go in life, you've got to be able to read and write.“

Interview with Key Informant

Although this is a problem for many areas in the country, this might be exacerbated by young learners who do not speak English as a first language (although this cannot be confirmed by this research), it is clear that to raise achievement to the levels required, serious attention must be paid to numeracy and literacy.

Recommendation

- Programmes that address issues of literacy and numeracy at GCSE level must be a priority for the borough. Schools are aware of the problem, and while some measures are being introduced the provision of extra activities borough wide could make a great contribution here.

8.3 Absenteeism, Exclusions, Self exclusions and “Bunking off”

8.3.1 Absenteeism

Many young people spoke about “bunking off” school, their own absenteeism, and exclusions. For many young people this is a common practice, which appears to be handled differently at different schools. Many young people spoke of various strategies they would use to be able to “bunk off” legitimately, such as the flouting of uniform rules. Respondents described how, if wearing the wrong shoes, or the wrong blazer, they would get sent home to change and use this excuse to spend the rest of the day out of school. Young people interviewed also spoke of the opportunity that arose with supply teachers, who did not have an official student roll for their class. Here, it was found that students from other classes would attend, using their names, and other students would provide fake (often joke) names, therefore causing chaos in terms of the official register.

Yet observational data drawn from some schools showed that the register is taken very seriously. At one of the schools in the borough that is rated outstanding, a short time spent in reception indicated that all school reception staff were familiar with students, and that sick notes and other absenteeism issues (even for one class) were taken very seriously and the data recorded with precision.³⁴

When examining the official statistics, it is clear that absenteeism is an issue for the borough, as evidenced in table 35. The borough has higher absenteeism rates than the London comparator and the national average in all cohorts across all schools (primary included) aside from the overall absence for pupils who qualify for free school meals. While this figure of 8.11% is higher than the London average, it is considerably lower than the national average.

Pupil Absence in Schools by Free School Meal Eligibility (Referenced by Location of Pupil Residence), 2006/2007			
	Barking and Dagenham	London	England
Overall Absence in All Schools	6.67	6.37	6.43
Authorised Absence in All Schools	5.54	5.18	5.45
Unauthorised Absence in All Schools	1.14	1.19	0.98
Persistent Absentees in All Schools	4.6	4	4.1
Overall Absence for FSM Pupils in All Schools	8.11	7.74	9.31
Overall Absence for non-FSM Pupils in All Schools	6.14	5.88	5.89
Unauthorised Absence for non-FSM Pupils in All Schools	0.91	0.95	0.75
Overall Absence in Maintained Secondary Schools	7.65	7.47	7.78
Authorised Absence in Maintained Secondary Schools	6.36	5.85	6.31
Unauthorised Absence in Maintained Secondary Schools	1.29	1.62	1.47
Persistent Absentees in Maintained Secondary Schools	6.9	6.2	6.6

Table 35: Pupil Absence in Schools by Free School Meal Eligibility 2006/2007
Source: National Statistics

³⁴ Observation of school in the borough

Absenteeism from school can be due to a wide variety of reasons, bullying, illness, familial pressures, caring duties. Not all absenteeism is the result of young people “bunking off”. However, whatever the reason, missed days of school quickly puts that young learner behind the class, and has serious consequences in terms of achievement. This may well be exacerbated with the introduction of compulsory education to 18 years of age.

Recommendations:

- More research is required into the reasons behind absenteeism in the borough, many different reasons (some legitimate, some not) were given for chronic absenteeism.
- Once this phenomenon is better understood, tailored programmes need to be developed for different cohorts. For example study support packages for those with illnesses, assistance for those young learners with caring duties. These approaches might address potential problems associated with missing school.

8.3.2 Exclusions

Some schools hide exclusions, others don't.

Key expert interview

School policy around exclusions varies wildly from school to school. In an interview with one head teacher, he informed the research team that he “had not excluded anyone for five years” while another head famously excluded 300 students his first day. While this latter example sounds extreme, it was tempered with a follow up programme to re-engage with all excluded pupils, and their families. From the interviews this seemed a successful strategy, albeit a sensational one.

One school in the borough improved dramatically. This has a lot to do with the head teacher who famously excluded 300 on his first day – however this was accompanied by reaching out to the parents of the excluded – and many were taken back.

Key Informant Interview

There are a number of interventions in the borough, and schools that seek to address problematic behaviour before exclusion takes place. The LATCHES team goes into schools when there are young people in danger of exclusion and constructs a support behaviour package. If the young person does not respond to these interventions, then they are excluded. However it was found that exclusion policy is haphazard at best. Some schools will send home those who are behaving badly – thereby denying them their entitlement to education. The consequences of this were explained through a key informant interview:

They say if they were to exclude officially then this would be bad for their permanent record. They are not really interested in a positive relationship with the kids that behave badly.

Some heads operate remotely and delegate a lot of this down – and then have to step in when there are problems.

Key Informant Interview

Once excluded the young learners are often found a place at College (where many actually flourish). The borough also runs the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which is a tuition centre for excluded learners.

Recommendations

- While exclusion policy must remain with schools, the inconsistent approach between schools is a problem for the borough. Good practice in this area could be established by the LA (perhaps by the LATCHES team) and schools could be encouraged to sign up to an exclusion charter of good practice.

8.4 Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

Barking and Dagenham has a high proportion of NEETs. Indeed, at the end of 2008 there were just under 9% of NEETs in the borough, considerably higher than the London average of 6.5%. NEET numbers are not evenly distributed across the borough. When examined at ward level there is evidence that most NEETs come from the South East of the Borough.³⁵ (Barking and Dagenham PCT, 2009). 76% of NEETs in the borough are white. These figures have already begun to rise with the recession. Indeed the proportion of NEETs across the country in the first three months of 2009 has increased from 13.6% to 15.6%. (Lipsett, 2009) The rapidity of this increase is worrying, and Barking and Dagenham should expect to see similar increases.

Although the borough has approximately 9% of young people who are NEET, it has been identified that 15% of young people in the borough are at risk of becoming NEET. To remedy this, a research project in the borough is developing a model of young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. The risk indicators are eligibility for free school meals, absenteeism as well as other socio-economic indicators. These are then used to develop a points score to identify these young people. This is being piloted in schools and once identified this cohort is split into groups according to the potential reasons for becoming NEET. Questionnaires or interviews are then delivered to this cohort to attempt to tailor programmes to them so that they are encouraged and enabled to stay on in education.³⁶ While it is far too early to say what effect this will have on the numbers who are NEET, it is presumed that this will certainly assist with bringing down these numbers in the coming years.

8.5 Banding, Gifted & Talented, labelling and reputation

While the above heading might appear a disparate collection, from talking to young people in the borough the way in which teachers, schools, peers and families see a particular young person can have a huge effect on their educational careers. Also, the way in which young learners are divided into groups like Gifted and Talented, or, at the

³⁵ However it must be noted that the connexions data on NEETs is not directly comparable to other data on NEETs, as Connexions does not count those learners taking a –gap year– as NEET, whereas the other data sources do not make this distinction

³⁶ Key Informant Interview

other end of the spectrum, as “problematic” is important as not all students receive the same level of enrichment or other activities. Young people are aware that some opportunities are not evenly distributed through the student population, and a level of resentment at this has been found.

YP1: My sisters in year seven and they took the top ones to Cambridge for a day trip to look around and do different activities and all of the rest of the people just stayed at school.

I: When the gifted and talented class get all these things how does that make you feel?

YP1: It's unfair really, it's not equal opportunities.

Conversation from Focus group

While it is clear that the decision to base provision on these groups is both economic and policy led, the result amongst some young people is they feel left out. This differentiation and stratification of young learners was found to result in poor behaviour at schools. That is, some young people said that they became “naughty” at school, (against their nature) as these were the groups that got attention, and extra activities. While this might be an excuse for poor behaviour, this certainly indicates a level of resentment amongst young learners towards each other.

YP2: They don't care what we do. No – they really don't care. It's like the more naughty you are in school – the more they let you off. If you get in trouble you get special treatment.

Interview with young learner

Young people claim difficulty in the transition from primary to secondary schools. Many report that they become ‘naughty’ or a ‘troublemaker’ at this point.

Both my girls were good students until the transition to secondary school from primary – around age 13.

Interview with parent

More serious perhaps are the reports of the effect this stratification has on teachers’ attitudes towards young people.

YP: I was in the lowest band at school, my brothers go there now, and one teacher was saying to my brother that this band don't get jobs, they don't go to college, don't go to Uni. This teacher was saying this to my brother's class, and my brother was saying you're so wrong all my sisters are in college. They treat us like we're not as good as the upper band.

I: So they don't provide as much for you?

YP: No, we don't get as much help as the others do. And we have to take our exams a year earlier than the others but they do it different now. The top group are going to look around universities, the next group don't do any of that and the low group don't do anything at all.

Conversation with Focus group

There were reports that not only does this labelling limit the activities that might be provided, some reported more serious outcomes from this labelling, such as threats that they may not be able to sit exams.

I: Do you feel that teachers judge you?

YP1: Sometimes you feel like a number as I've been told (by a teacher) "you're failing so I'm not going to put you in the exam", which doesn't make you feel any more confident towards the exam.

I: Has any one else been told this?

(Three participants agree)

I: Have you been excluded from an exam?

YP1: I've been told it but they've never actually done it. But they always say it. They make you feel unworthy by threatening that you can't sit the exam.

I: Why do you think they do that?

YP1: Because they can. They have that view all the time, they don't actually do it, but they do it to make you do better in class or something. I actually was doing good in class but I got distracted easily and I was talking and that - but I was actually doing good. Then he came in and told me that I got a D in my coursework and I couldn't do the exam. And I was like, they can't do that and he was telling me he would stand outside the exam room and tell me not to come in. And I was waiting for him to do that and was going to push him out the way.

Conversation with Focus group

It is not only outside structures, schools and teachers that label young learners – there was a high level of self labelling, and complex school hierarchies that have a direct effect on both behaviour and achievement. This is nothing new to the classroom, however in terms of WP and encouraging those under-represented groups to achieve academically, this identity construction that occurs through schools is important.

P: If you work hard at school you are ostracised socially as a geek/boffin. The girls are very bitchy at the school there is a serious hierarchy of popular down to geek.

I: What makes you popular?

P: Popular is about an attitude – of rebellion, of being seen not to care. So they bunk off, smoke and are cheeky to teachers.

Interview with parent of young learners.

This labelling, once begun is very difficult to reverse. As one young learner put it:

YP: In school, you can get a certain reputation in school and a reputation is hard to get rid of. In college, it is more fair. Some teachers had me labelled.

Interview with young learner

For this individual, it took moving out of school and into a college environment to have a “second chance” as he was labelled and considered to have a “reputation”. The young person in question is having no further difficulties at college, and seems to have lost this label.

8.6 Money and work

I: So why do you think young people from the borough don't go into University?

YP: Because we ain't got the money.

Interview with young learner

The primary reason given by young people in the borough for not entering HE was to do with the cost of study. Even when young people were aware of bursaries (although none were aware of the specifics of these), they were still not willing to take on the level of debt associated with university. Many report fear about the recession and feel that they do not want to start life with a large amount of student debt. This appears to be more profound from those in the lower socio-economic bands, and they feel that they cannot put this financial pressure on their families. For many young people college is enough of a financial burden as many have to work to support themselves through their education. This is exacerbated by the feeling that attending university necessitates studying at an institution away from home, living on campus and experiencing the full “lifestyle” associated with the university experience. Alongside this they do not think that the recession will be over quickly and feel that even if they do complete a degree that there is no guarantee of a job after their studies.

I am aware of scholarships, but I finish my course in June, so now I'm just looking for jobs. I am not saying that I won't go in the future but at

the moment with the money and that I can't afford to go. I work already, I have a job at McDonald's, I'm a manager there. It's okay, but I don't get any days off. I've got a group of friends there, so it's a laugh. It's good it's giving me experience and it is something I can put on my CV.

Focus Group Conversation

As well as general costs of going to University, another problem that intersects with this is the fact that many young people do not know what they would like to do after they complete school, so they feel that working (until this question is resolved) is a good idea.

YP1: Ain't you getting a job? I'd prefer to get a job.

YP2: I'd prefer to get a job

*YP1: I would much prefer to get a job, why would you want to leave school and f***in' carry on studying?*

YP3: I'd rather get a job – but my mum is spewing about it and says that I have to get myself on a college course, or else!

YP2: I want to get a job so I can save up for a decent college course and not go for some rubbish one.

YP1: I don't know what I want to do so there's no point me just going to college. So I'd rather get a job and decide what I want to do and then go to college or Uni.

Focus Group Conversation

While the expense of university was seen as a deterrent to many, responses from the Barking College questionnaire confirmed that this was a big issue for some, but not the majority. Here, 51% of those surveyed said that University will not cost too much, leaving 49% believing that it will. Given that 60% want to go onto University, the cost factor may well be preventing a significant majority from taking this route.

A young learner from Barking College explains his predicament about choosing to go to HE, and confirms what many young people told us about their attitude to university and job prospects; there are no guarantees of employment after studying a degree.

I: Do you want to go to university?

YP: I do and I don't. I do because I see everyone else going and I feel that if I don't go I won't do as well as them. But I don't wanna go back because everyone else is going I feel like I want to do well.

I: What are the things that might be putting you off?

YP: Moving away. And the money side. Because uni is a lot of money and I don't want to be in debt as soon as I come out.

I: But do you think once you get a university degree you will then earn more money?

YP: Yeah but that's not 100%. I could go and end up in a job with someone who hasn't gone to uni. So I don't know.

Interview with young learner

This belief, that even if you do graduate with a degree, there might not be a job for you might be exacerbated by recent news headlines to this effect, but this belief is widespread. From the Barking College Survey 60% of young learners said that you do not need to go to university to get a good job.

9 Ideas from Young Learners

We asked a number of young people in Barking and Dagenham how they would go about increasing participation rates at University. There were two main responses from young learners in the borough. The most common idea was for more talks at schools from people who have gone to university.

I think it's important that there are speeches going on in colleges and schools I found that easier when people come in from other colleges in the area and talk to about what they're is available and on offer, that helps you to make a decision. So I definitely think that is a starting point.

Interview with female learner

Although there is a lot of existing activity like this in the borough, the young people were quite specific in what kinds of speakers would motivate them. Firstly, they should be young and still at university so they can explain what the lifestyle is like. One young person suggested that these speakers should be *...under 25, not old, like 30 or something.*³⁷ Secondly, the speakers should be from the borough perhaps even *well-known faces around the Borough to get them to talk - and say look what you could do.*³⁸ This could include former students coming back to talk about their HE experiences.

Hopefully they can relate because you have younger people that went to the same school, and if they see them do it they think well I could do that. And you need to show that not everyone at university goes to a really posh school, you can still do it.

Interview with female learner

Thirdly, these sessions should involve more than a straight talk, and include demonstrations, or include materials and projects that the speakers are involved in at college or university.

Something more visual, if you went and showed them what you are actually doing instead of just having a bit of paper saying - well you could do this or that. For example, say I went into a school I would take

³⁷ Response from female learner from focus group

³⁸ *ibid*, same respondent.

my graphics work with me and show people and they might think „well I could do that“. You notice something a bit more visual so they can actually see what they could do.

Interview with female college learner

The other group of responses revolved around the costs of university and assistance with finances.

YP1: Show people how they can pay for it. With student loans and stuff like that. Because most people in Barking and Dagenham can't afford it.

YP2: Make it free.

Responses from male learners at focus group

Indeed, many responses described how we need to communicate the value of Higher Education into monetary terms. This goes along with the findings that many young people in the borough make their choices because of financial concerns. The idea that university leads to a better job is not necessarily believed by young people we spoke with. In fact, many think that a degree is no guarantee of a job, particularly in uncertain economic times.

You need to show that going to university will earn you more money versus then when you don't go.

Interview with male learner

Just tell them that you get a better chance of getting a decent job that pays decent money if you've got some sort of higher qualification than just GCSEs or A-levels. You've just got a better chance of getting further in life and in your future.

Interview with female learner

I think they need to be made more aware of what can happen. Maybe talking to people who have not gone to university and people who have and not kind of glamorising not going to university. Because that's what's been going on TV a lot of people are saying - I didn't go to university and I've made it big so you don't need to either and just being made aware of that.

Interview with male learner

9.1 Recommendations:

- Continue with these kinds of activities that are common in the borough, but tailor them to the young people by recruiting former school students to come back to their schools and talk about their HE experiences in an exciting and visual way. Young people would prefer this advice from other younger adults.
- These talks should include those studying on vocational programmes and explain vocational progression routes to.

10 Conclusions

Barking and Dagenham has made considerable progress over the last few years in raising attainment at all key stages. The numbers of learners from the borough progressing into HE have risen year on year from 261 students at age 18/19 who entered HE in 2001, to 609 students at age 18/19 in 2007/8. Although this increase is impressive, there are still groups in Barking and Dagenham who are under-represented, in particular white indigenous working class.

Whilst there are ambitious regeneration plans for the area, as it sits within the Thames Gateway, many areas of Barking and Dagenham suffer from multiple deprivation including health, economic, and education. The current economic climate has, unsurprisingly, made this worse for many.

A number of young people identified through this study are particularly disengaged with education. Teen pregnancy rates are high, and teen mothers in the borough do not engage with HE. 15% of young people in the borough are at risk of becoming NEET. There are 21.4% of young learners in the borough with Special Educational Needs. Reports of drug taking before school, and “bunking off” school means that many young people are deemed to be self-excluding. There is substantial evidence that this is because they feel that they do not get enough attention at school, or that they feel their schools are sub-standard, or they simply do not know what they want to do later in life, and do not understand the relevance of what they are learning. A picture of lived educational experience emerged from the accounts of young learners which begins to suggest that educational opportunity structures within school and beyond can be exclusory rather than inclusive in terms of probability of HE access.

Despite these minority groups, 60% of young people in the borough say that they want to go on to Higher Education. This is much higher than the national average of 50%. From this, it seems that interventions designed to raise aspirations (coupled, perhaps, with the influence of BME groups for whom HE is a priority) have been successful. This being the case, future projections of numbers from the borough who apply to HE will continue to increase.

It is therefore attainment, rather than aspiration that is preventing young learners from the borough from going into HE. Indeed Key Stage results at all levels are below London and national averages, however, again, these have been improving year on year. Most important perhaps are Key Stage 4 results, and in particular results for Maths and English GCSEs which are particularly low, and which may prevent many from aspiring to progress to A-Levels.

Fortunately there are other progression routes which are gaining currency, including the new Diplomas, NVQs, BTECs, or routes into HE from apprenticeships and work based learning. While these are available to all young learners, many schools still do not sufficiently value these routes and favour the traditional GCSE to A-Level to HE pattern. Nor do schools fully understand the wide range of vocational subjects taught at many HEIs, and FE Colleges at HE level. This is changing, and further support to *appropriate* IAG provision in the borough would allow those learners who consider themselves “not academic” to still engage with HE.

Indeed, while IAG provision in the borough is good, there are still many young people who do not take advantage of these services, or who do not receive appropriate advice. While the University of East London provides excellent IAG from the Barking Learning Centre, this is mainly for learners who are aged 20+. UEL’s outreach activities in the borough are highly visible and highly valued, however now that this

research has uncovered groups who are particularly disengaged from education, these programmes and interventions can be further tailored and adapted for the borough.

The Compact developed by UEL that guarantees level three learners use of the university's library, and guarantees interviews, or a place, should be better advertised, and taken up by all schools in the borough. Although HCFHE is a partner in this research, the college is not a member of the compact, and should be encouraged to join in the very near future.

Schools in the borough have undergone vast improvements in the last few years, and by all accounts are continuing to improve. This alone will encourage increased numbers entering HE through a variety of routes. The 6th form consortia arrangement means that there is an excellent curricula offer for 6th formers in the borough, and early reports from young people themselves are positive about this arrangement. Schools in the borough are all in wave 4 of the Building Schools for the Future Programme, and while there might be disruptions over the coming months and years due to the physical builds that will be taking place, this will see many schools updated with much needed new facilities. Again this may well encourage more young people to engage with, and be excited about, their school experience.

Colleges and Schools do enjoy a number of links, however these are haphazard, and schools and colleges see each other as competition. Unfortunately, the result of this is that many young learners miss out on opportunities offered by FE colleges, yet this research has found that some young people who do not "fit in" well with the structured style of learning at school flourish when they attend a FE college.

Widening Participation is taken seriously by the University of East London, which has a formalised WP strategy and inclusive policies. Indeed, it is the most diverse University in the country. While many Barking and Dagenham learners attend the university, these are primarily mature learners.

When talking to the young people of Barking and Dagenham, they cite the cost (and perceived cost) of university as a reason why they do not choose this route. Many are not willing (or not equipped) to incur the level of student debt that a degree course entails. While there is the aspiration in the borough to go on to HE, and attainment at all key stages is expected to rise, the limit in university places, coupled with rising applications may well mean that many institutions will want to resort to increasing top up fees as part of their business model. From our conversations with young people in the borough, who are already concerned about the costs of Higher Education, this represents a considerable risk to the young people of Barking and Dagenham's future engagement with HE.

11 Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations found throughout the body of the report. It must be said that the borough has made excellent progress in engaging its young learners, and great improvements have been made in participation rates into HE.

11.1 Schools, and Colleges

- Stronger links between schools and colleges should be formalised, and all schools in the borough should be encouraged to join UELs Compact agreement.
- Programmes that assist with encouraging schools to consider apprenticeships, diplomas and other vocational routes as serious alternatives to A-levels should be developed. This could be further embedded into taster days run both by the colleges and UEL.
- To remedy the feeling that young people are not respected, innovations around learner voice would be appropriate here – encouraging the schools to listen to their learners in a structured way.
- Schools and FE colleges need to put aside competitive instincts and forge closer ties, particularly with vocational routes.
- Schools need to share their good practice – the 6th form consortia structure would be useful for this,
- Programmes that address issues of literacy and numeracy at GCSE level must be a priority for the borough. Schools are aware of the problem, and while some measures are being introduced the provision of extra activities borough wide could make a great contribution here.
- More research is required into the reasons behind absenteeism in the borough, through the research many different reasons (some legitimate, some not) were given for chronic absenteeism. Once this phenomenon is better understood, tailored programmes need to be developed for different cohorts. For example study support packages for those with illnesses, assistance for those young learners with caring duties might be potential areas where the problems associated with missing school might be mitigated.
- While exclusion policy must remain with schools, the inconsistent approach between schools is a problem for the borough. Good practice in this area could be established by the LA (perhaps by the LATCHES team) and schools could be encouraged to sign up to an exclusion charter of good practice.
- Programmes aimed at male learners from the lowest socio-economic bands need to be developed to encourage HE participation. Given the character of achievement in this cohort, these could emphasise more vocational routes into HE, and as such, the FE Colleges should lead on this.

- Although the male populations show less inclination and poorer achievement than female counterparts, programmes for white indigenous females should also be run in the borough. From the interviews it is clear that there are many issues affecting young women in the borough – teenage pregnancy, and many unpaid carers tend to be female, so that this group also needs encouragement to achieve and enter HE.
- It is clear from this research, that interventions to raise aspirations of young learners have been effective, however what is now needed are interventions to raise the aspirations of young learners' families, so that they get the encouragement and support they need to go into HE successfully.
- Blanket Dyslexia testing to all young people in the borough through the school system. HCFHE use an online initial assessment of 10 questions to identify potential Dyslexics. These could then be referred for further more complete testing.

11.2 Local Authority

- Local Press continue to promote the achievements of young people in the borough.
- Initiatives by the LA to promote young people's achievements should also continue, e.g. Southwark Council recently displayed billboard signs wishing its young people good luck in GCSE and other exams. This could be replicated in Barking and Dagenham.

11.3 UEL

- Although many HE entrants from the borough find their way to UEL, recruitment activities in the borough could be strengthened. While UELs schools and community team actively engage with schools in the borough, a borough specific review could be initiated to build on the existing good work, and to encourage more learners from Barking and Dagenham.
- UEL and the FE colleges also can form closer ties – particularly in subject areas where there is already a good relationship e.g. UEL and BC links in the creative industries. This could then be linked in more fully with the Creative Way and other initiatives as these industries are key to regeneration priorities in the Thames Gateway

11.4 IAG provision and Work Placements

- Although all careers advisers spoke well of UELs activities, and in particular of the student ambassadors, when visiting many careers libraries at schools, the research team did notice a lack of UEL prospectuses on shelves. This could be easily remedied by a mail out of new materials.
- The University of East London, Barking College and other educational institutions in the borough could themselves open their doors to work placements. In particular, UEL with its broad subject areas, and ancillary non-

academic departments, could provide work placements for young people who wish to be involved in: research, administration, teaching, facilities management, project management, catering, printing, IT, along with subject based areas such as health, visual arts, architecture, product design, business, social sciences, media etc

- Volunteering opportunities for these work placement weeks should also be considered and added to the trident system
- Anonymisation of young learners' records when being matched to work would prevent gender bias when assigning placements. While ethnic, or disability biases were not tested through the research, anonymisation would also prevent these biases also.

11.5 Ideas from young learners

- Continue with these kinds of activities that are common in the borough, but tailor them to the young people by recruiting former school students to come back to their schools and talk about their HE experiences in an exiting and visual way. Young people would prefer this advice from other younger adults.
- These talks should include those studying on vocational programmes and explain vocational routes to progression.
- Improve IAG around the true costs of university – and emphasise that HE qualifications will, on the whole, help secure a well paid job on completion.

11.6 Areas for further research

- Longitudinal study of the effects of migration patterns on HE participation
- An examination of these research questions related to younger learners i.e. an examination of what primary schools in the area are doing in terms of preparation for HE entry
- The effects of “brain drain” on the borough. From the research many young learners saw HE engagement as a passport out of the borough. If the ambitions for Barking and Dagenham are realised, and more young learners go into HE – there needs to be corresponding job creation for graduates in the borough.

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13 Appendices

13.1 Appendix B – Barking College Questionnaire



Barking College Survey

Welcome to the Communities Research Barking College Student Survey. This survey aims to examine the choices that learners in Barking & Dagenham make.

All those who leave contact details, including full postcode, will be put forward into a prize draw to **win a Nintendo Wii**. Please note that although you need to provide your name and contact details (in case you win the Wii) all names will be kept confidential and no personal names or data that might identify an individual will be included in the final report.

Participation in this research is important, however you do not have to answer any questions if you would prefer not to. All answers will be treated with the strictest of confidence. We hope that we can work together to provide valuable insights into young peoples' lives and their educational choices in Barking & Dagenham.

The research findings will be gathered into a final report in June 2009. This research will be used to provide all involved parties with a better understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors that contribute to low participation rates in education in Barking & Dagenham, in order to establish what might be done to improve them.

CONTINUUM

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For more information about the project, please feel free to contact us further.

Contact: Karina Berzins

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e-mail: k.e.berzins@uel.ac.uk

Section 1: Personal Details

Please provide contact details if you would like to be entered into the prize draw for a Nintendo Wii games console.

1. Your First name _____

2. Your Surname _____

3. Your E-mail address _____

4. Your FULL Postcode _____

5. Would you be willing to participate in a follow up telephone interview or focus group?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide a contact telephone number - mobile preferred (please note you must leave these details for a chance to win the Nintendo Wii)

6. Phone number _____

Section 2: School Experience

7. Which school did you go to?

☐ Robert Clack

☐ Trinity

☐ All Saints

☐ Barking Abbey

☐ Dagenham Park

☐ Eastbrook

☐ Eastbury

☐ Sydney Russell

☐ Jo Richardson

☐ Warren

☐ Other (please specify) _____

8. Did you complete A levels?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all and 5 is very much – how much did you enjoy school?

- ☐ 1 – I did not enjoy school at all
☐ 2
☐ 3 – I thought school was OK – not good not bad
☐ 4
☐ 5 – I enjoyed school very much

10. What did you like best about school?

11. What did you like least about school?

12. What was the best thing about going to school in Barking & Dagenham?

13. What was the worst thing about going to school in Barking & Dagenham?

Section 3: Information, Advice and Guidance

14. Did you get any careers advice at school?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

15. Was this advice useful? (On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not useful and 5 is very useful)

- ☐ 1 – This advice was not useful at all
☐ 2
☐ 3 – This advice was somewhat useful
☐ 4
☐ 5 – This advice was very useful

16. Did you receive any information or advice about enrolling in Barking College before you enrolled?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

16a. If you did receive this information where did you receive it from?

- ☐ Barking College
- ☐ Connexions
- ☐ School
- ☐ Barking Learning Centre
- ☐ Barking Education Advice Shop (Vicarage Fields)

- ☐ Eaststreet drop in centre
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

16b. Was this information useful? (On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not useful and 5 is very useful)

- ☐ 1 – This advice was not useful at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 – This advice was somewhat useful
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – This advice was very useful

17. How did you hear about Barking College? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ School
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Advertising flyer etc
- ☐ Prospectus/Course Guide
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

18. Was the application and admission process at Barking College easy? (On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not easy and 5 is very easy)

- ☐ 1 – It was very difficult
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 – It was neither easy nor difficult
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 – It was very easy

19. What level course are you studying?

- ☐ Entry Level / Basic Skills / ESOL / Introductory Diploma
- ☐ Level 1 / NVQ1 / RVQ1 / First Certificate
- ☐ Level 2 / NVQ2 / Intermediate / First Diploma
- ☐ Level 3 / National Diploma / NVQ3 / A Level
- ☐ Level 4 or 5 / HNC / HND / Degree Course / Foundation Degree
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

20. What subject area are you studying?

- ☐ Construction

- ☐ Health & Social Care
- ☐ Hospitality / Catering
- ☐ Art & Design
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Holistic Therapies & Beauty
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Leisure, Sport & Tourism
- ☐ Performing Arts
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Other (*please specify*) _____

Section 4: University

21. Has anyone in your family been to University? (*please select all that apply*)

- ☐ A parent (or carer)
- ☐ Brother or Sister
- ☐ Aunt or Uncle
- ☐ Cousins
- ☐ Not sure

22. How would you get more young people from Barking & Dagenham into University?

23. Tick any of the statements that you think are true

- ☐ Getting a job is more important than going to University
- ☐ I would like to go to University
- ☐ Going to University will cost too much
- ☐ My friends will think I am a snob if I go to University
- ☐ University is for posh people

- ☐ My family want me to go to University
- ☐ University is not for people like me
- ☐ University is too far away
- ☐ You need to go to university to get a good job
- ☐ University will be too hard for me
- ☐ If I could afford to go to University I would go
- ☐ University doesn't help you get a job
- ☐ None of my friends want to go to University
- ☐ Some of my friends want to go to University
- ☐ I want to start my own business

Section 5: Demographics

24. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

25. How would you describe your ethnicity?

26. How old are you?

- ☐ 15
- ☐ 16
- ☐ 17
- ☐ 18
- ☐ 19
- ☐ 20 - 24
- ☐ 25- 30
- ☐ 30+

27. What newspapers do you read?

- ☐ The Sun
- ☐ The Independent
- ☐ The Guardian
- ☐ The Daily Mail
- ☐ The Daily Telegraph
- ☐ The Financial Times

- ☐ Daily Express
- ☐ Metro
- ☐ Daily Star
- ☐ Daily Mirror
- ☐ Barking & Dagenham Post
- ☐ London Lite
- ☐ The London Paper
- ☐ Other (*please specify*) _____

28. How many books are there where you live?

- ☐ None (No Books)
- ☐ 1 – 10 Books
- ☐ 11 – 50 Books (enough to fill one shelf)
- ☐ 51 – 100 Books (enough to fill one bookshelf)
- ☐ 101 – 200 Books (enough to fill two bookshelves)
- ☐ More than 200 books

Survey completed

Thank you for completing this survey about your educational choices. We very much appreciate your contribution.

If you have given contact details your name will be included in our random draw for the Nintendo Wii to be held in June 2009.

With very best wishes and the best of luck,

Continuum,
University of East London

13.2 Appendix D – Consent Form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need prior to consenting to participate in this study.

HE and Communities Research – Barking and Dagenham

Project Description

Continuum – the Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies at UEL has been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to undertake research on low participation rates in Higher Education in Barking & Dagenham. The aims of the study are to provide a clearer understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors which lie behind the participation rates in Barking and Dagenham.

You are being asked to participate in a focus group discussion or interview. The discussion will be focused on gaining your insights into how you have experienced education and how expectations and aims have been realised.

Confidentiality of the Data

The interview tapes, subsequent transcripts of the tapes, and any notes taken will be given a code and your name will not appear anywhere with the data. Only the principal investigator, project manager, and administrative assistant will have access to the data. The data will be stored on password protected computer files and in a locked office.

Location

This research study is being funded by HEFCE and being carried out by Continuum, Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies at the University of East London.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the interview process you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

I have read the information above relating to the programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy of this form to keep. I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only those involved in carrying out the study will have access to the data.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in this study, and I understand that this will be audio taped and/or filmed, and this may be screened at the report launch event or via other outlets. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

Participant's signature: _____

Karina Berzins

University of East London

CONTINUUM, Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies

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13.3 Appendix E – Promotional material and information about the project

Communities and Widening Participation in Education in Barking & Dagenham

CONTINUUM

**Centre for Widening Participation and Policy Studies,
University of East London**

Background

Continuum – the Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies at UEL has been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to undertake research on low participation rates in Higher Education in Barking & Dagenham.

The current suite of research projects will build on research previously commissioned by HEFCE on young participation in higher education, commonly referred to as the Four Cities research. This provided a rich and complex picture of the processes that underpin the low rates of participation of young people in higher education in the following constituencies: Birmingham Hodge Hill, Bristol South, Nottingham North, and Sheffield Brightside

The five cities research is a further stage of geographically focused work with a direct emphasis on the facilitation of longer term HE engagement in low participation neighbourhoods and the development of transferable models of practice.

The aims of the study are:

- Firstly, to provide a clearer understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors which lie behind the low participation rates in each community.
- Secondly, to help HE providers to develop different and effective ways of engaging with their local communities, in particular with schools.
- Thirdly, to provide evidence for longer term planning and strategic development of widening participation in selected areas, and possibly provide lessons and models for potential transfer.

Barking & Dagenham

Barking & Dagenham has been identified by HEFCE (The Higher Education Funded Council for England) as an area with low Higher Education participation rates.

Barking & Dagenham is a mixed borough, with six of its wards in the 10% most deprived in England. Educational achievement in secondary education is also mixed, with some wards significantly out performing others. There are 11 secondary schools,

and 1 FE college in the Borough. There are also a wide range of voluntary sector and other organisations that provide advice, or training to young people. We hope to work with all of these organisations to provide a clear picture of the opportunities for further and higher education in the Borough.

To fully understand the reasons behind these low participation rates, we will be conducting interviews with key personnel at schools, colleges, voluntary organisations, and youth groups. We will also be speaking with a wide range of young people from across the Borough to hear their stories about their ambitions, future plans, and educational choices.

Our research team at Continuum are highly experienced in engaging with young people, have been CRB checked, and are committed to championing widening participation in education for all.

Why have we contacted you?

We have selected participants due to their experience and expertise in working in education or with young people in the area.

Participation in this research is important, however you do not have to answer any questions if you would prefer not to. We hope that we can work together to provide valuable insight into young peoples' lives and their educational choices in Barking & Dagenham. All information will be treated as confidential.

The research findings will be gathered into a final report in June 2009. This research will be used to provide all involved parties with a better understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors that contribute to low participation rates in education in Barking & Dagenham, in order to establish what might be done to improve them.

CONTINUUM

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For more information about the project, please feel free to contact us further.

Contact: Karina Berzins

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13.4 Appendix F - Acronyms

BC	Barking College
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
FE	Further Education
HCFHE	Havering College of Further and Higher Education
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	The Higher Education Funding Council of England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IHHD	Institute for Health and Human Development
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IT	Information Technologies
LA	Local Authority
LDA	London Development Agency
LERI	London East Research Institute
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOA	Super Output Area
UEL	The University of East London
WP	Widening Participation

[illegible]



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